

**UNIVERSITY OF WINCHESTER**

**“Do you really want us to tell you the truth?”**

**An Exploration of School Values Using Personal Construct Theory**

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Doctor of Education

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This Thesis has been completed as a requirement for a postgraduate research degree of the University of Winchester

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**Abstract**

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This thesis analyses the concept of values in education and character education from the perspective of primary school children, aged between eight and nine years old. The work adopts a Constructivist approach and ethos. The underlying theory and the methodological approach are based on Kelly's (1991) Personal Construct Theory (PCT). The research focused on the views of children in two parallel Year 4 classes in a Church of England primary school. This is a participatory study with all children in both classes participating at some level with the research, but the report deals only with the 41 children who wanted to contribute and who had parental consent. The research process took place over the course of one school year. The data were gathered using Self-Characterisations and Repertory Grid Techniques alongside a strategy devised using dyadic opposites and drawing (Kelly, 1991). The findings demonstrated the children's abilities to express their own values and to critique the school values through the various PCT methods used. PCT offered all children the opportunity to be involved and the insights they shared were as a result of their active engagement. The findings raised questions around the discourse surrounding character education, suggesting that values clarification is a more effective approach in enabling children to articulate and understand the values they hold, rather than the more traditional values transmission model. This thesis, therefore, calls into question the pedagogical methods of teaching about morals and values using a didactic and authoritarian approach. The findings demonstrated the importance held by children of active participation in learning, and their desire for a supportive and democratic learning environment offering opportunities for autonomy and personal agency.

Keywords: [Values Education. Resilience. Democracy. Personal Construct Theory. Children's perspectives]

## List of Contents

Declaration and Copyright statement .....	2
Acknowledgements .....	3
Abstract.....	4
Chapter 1 .....	9
Democratic or Authoritarian values education? .....	9
Research context .....	10
Structure of the report .....	12
Chapter 2 .....	14
The place of values in the educational curriculum .....	14
Values.....	14
What is morality? .....	16
Philosophical foundations of values in education .....	17
Development of Morals .....	19
Defining Values, Citizenship, Moral and Character Education .....	22
Defining Citizenship .....	23
Defining Moral Education .....	24
Defining Character Education .....	25
Historical context of Education in England since the 1870 Education Act in relation to values education .....	27
The Current Place of Values Education in England.....	29
Rugby Values and Military Ethos .....	31
Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) .....	33
Resilience and Grit .....	34
Participation and Pupil Voice.....	35
Fundamental British Values .....	36
Character Education .....	37
Conclusion.....	38
Chapter 3 .....	41
Epistemological and ethical considerations for researching values in school .....	41
World View .....	41
Qualitative Research.....	44
Personal Construct Theory and Constructive Alternativism .....	45
Self-Characterisation .....	48
Repertory Grid Technique (RGT) .....	49
Research with Children .....	51

Radical listening .....	53
Interview .....	54
Ethical position .....	55
Conclusion.....	58
Chapter 4 .....	60
A critical evaluation of PCT methods for use with children .....	60
Self-Characterisation .....	61
Values Group Work.....	66
Repertory Grid Technique .....	68
Conclusion.....	71
Chapter 5 .....	72
Introduction to the participants in their own words and pictures.....	72
Chapter 6 .....	82
Children's views and perceptions of their school values and school experiences through PCT approaches .....	82
Outline of chapter and aims .....	82
Self-Characterisation .....	82
Children's themes .....	84
Provide caring and support.....	84
Pro-social bonding or Friendship .....	87
Clear, Consistent Boundaries.....	92
Meaningful Participation (Democracy, Autonomy and Agency) .....	94
High Expectations .....	99
Life skills .....	104
Resilience .....	106
Evidence of the School Values .....	108
Summary .....	109
Values Group Work.....	110
Love.....	111
Honesty .....	115
Hope.....	121
Forgiveness .....	125
Summary .....	130
Repertory Grid Technique .....	130
Seb .....	131
Bethany .....	133

Harry .....	136
Austin .....	138
Esther .....	141
Soraya .....	143
Themes generated by the Repertory Grids .....	146
Constructs grouped according to the school values .....	147
Chapter 7 .....	148
Conclusions, Reflections and evaluations.....	148
Key Findings .....	148
Contribution to Knowledge .....	151
What I Have Learnt .....	152
Limitations of the Research .....	153
Future Research Direction .....	154
Recommendations for Practice .....	154
Reference List .....	157
Appendix 1 Project Information Sheet .....	171
Appendix 2 Participants' Self-Characterisations in full.....	173

## List of Figures

Figure 1 Lesson plan notes introducing the classes to Self-Characterisation .....	63
Figure 2 Script for values group work.....	67
Figure 3 Elements elicited from the Self-Characterisations for the Repertory grids .....	83
Figure 4 The children's constructs about the school values .....	110
Figure 5 Definitions of love and the opposite bullying.....	112
Figure 6 Examples of Love with Hate as its opposite .....	114
Figure 7 Example of Love with ignorance as its opposite .....	114
Figure 8: Example of Honesty with Lying as it's opposite .....	116
Figure 9: Example of Honesty with Unhonest as its opposite .....	116
Figure 10: Examples of Honesty with Lying to get out of trouble as it's opposite.....	117
Figure 11: Examples of Honesty with lying to present a preferable sense of self .....	118

Figure 12: Examples of Honesty with lying to a friend as it's opposite .....	119
Figure 13: Examples of Honesty highlighting the tensions between lying to a teacher and to friends .....	120
Figure 14: Difficulty with defining Hope .....	121
Figure 15: Examples of Hope for possessions with Not hoping as it's opposite .....	122
Figure 16: Examples of Hope for recovery from illness with believing in yourself as it's opposite ....	122
Figure 17: Examples of Hope for getting your own way with giving up as it's opposite .....	123
Figure 18: Examples of Hope as Achieving success in school with not believing in yourself as it's opposite. ....	124
Figure 19: Example of Forgiveness with the Opposite of sorry as it's opposite .....	125
Figure 20: Examples of Forgiveness: Admitting fault to friends with Not forgiving as it's opposite ..	126
Figure 21: Example of Forgiveness admitting fault to friends with Saying sorry as it's opposite .....	127
Figure 22: Examples of Forgiveness addressing the process of forgiving .....	128
Figure 23: Issues around Forgiveness .....	128
Figure 24: Forgiveness as deception .....	129
Figure 25: Seb's Repertory Grid .....	132
Figure 26: Bethany's Repertory Grid .....	134
Figure 27: Harry's repertory grid .....	136
Figure 28: Austin's Repertory grid .....	138
Figure 29: Esther's Repertory grid .....	141
Figure 30: Soraya's Repertory grid .....	143
Figure 31: Constructs grouped under Democracy and Autonomy .....	146
Figure 32: Constructs grouped under friendship .....	146



## Chapter 1

### Democratic or Authoritarian values education?

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) states that all children have the right to think for themselves and to develop and express these views without coercion from others according to their personal beliefs and to their religion or culture (United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), 1989). Despite this declaration, there seems to be an educative agenda in the United Kingdom (UK) which is concerned with Behaviourist principles, telling children which values they should hold and providing a template for the 'correct' kind of character (Glasser, 1992; Suissa, 2015), rather than enabling and trusting children to make their own informed choices (Articles 5, 12, 13 and 14) and to develop their own personalities and characters (UNGA, 1989).

A current focus of educational discourse in the UK has been on values, character and moral education as a vehicle for shaping children with 'positive moral attributes' (Department for Education (DfE), 2019). This discourse is largely led by interest groups and the Government (Allen and Bull, 2018). In recent years, Conservative government initiatives have supported a character education model in partnership with the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues (DfE, 2014b; DfE, 2019). The centre is funded largely by the John Templeton Foundation, which is driven by a Christian neoconservative agenda (Allen and Bull, 2018). Adopting a resource and approach which aligns with a Christian ideology could be seen to conflict with celebrating diversity within the classroom (Jerome and Kisby, 2019). 'Character' was identified as a 'failure' of the education system in the 2013 report on the 2011 riots (Department for Communities and Local Government (DfCaLG), 2013), which led to an appetite for addressing a perceived lack of moral character in British children through an approach already popularly adopted in schools in the USA (Lickona, 1996). Despite government grants and launches, 'Character Education' has not been universally adopted. Some schools have developed their own programmes or adopted a values clarification model (DfE, 2017). However, the Jubilee Centre has extended its influence to Ofsted, who have identified in their new framework (Ofsted, 2019), that schools should support learners to 'develop character' (Ofsted, 2019:11). While this is regarded by the Jubilee Centre as an endorsement of their approach and resources (Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, 2019), the statement seems to enable schools the flexibility and freedom to approach the development of character in their own way, in line with the DfE findings (DfE, 2017).

## Research context

In this thesis I explore children's views about the set of values promoted by a particular school. I used aspects of Personal Construct Theory (PCT) (Kelly, 1991) as a framework for the research design and analysis.

The research stems from a period of volunteering in a local primary school where I spent one day a week over the academic year. I chose the school as the ethos aligned with mine; eschewing Behaviourist approaches and aiming for a Democratic ethos (Glasser, 1986). I was struck by the way the school had abandoned a set of behavioural rules and replaced them with a set of publicly stated values; Love, Honesty, Hope and Forgiveness. This appeared a pluralistic approach reinforcing and reflecting the diverse community of the school. The school addressed the issue of British Values by situating them within the UNCRC articles (DfE, 2014; UNGA, 1989). As my teaching approach and values favour a democratic approach with an emphasis on pupil voice, my initial belief was that this school would be an example for my research report of this working well. The school website stated that *everyone* agreed on the four values; however, for practical reasons the four values were decided by school staff, amended by the foundation governor and then shared with the children. The children were not consulted in the generation of the values, but were introduced to them by the adults. This could call into question whether the school can be characterised as truly 'democratic' in authenticity from the outset as adults had already made decisions about the school values before they were introduced to the children.

However, this is not to say the intention to be democratic was not there, or well meaning. The Head Teacher was intent on bringing into the school research that would evaluate how the approach they had used, had been effective. A catalyst for this was a child who had asked, "Why do you lot (teachers) only use the values when you're telling us off?". The question provided myself and the Head Teacher with a different perspective with which to explore the child's view. The school valued the expression of pupil voice, a position seen as non-negotiable by the Head Teacher at the time. However, despite an apparent positive approach, the child's question alerted the Head Teacher to the negative use of the values, for reprimanding and correcting pupil behaviour. This suggests a different story held by the child in comparison to that held by the adults (Paige, 2013). Rather than looking at teacher interviews and observations of the values in action, I became more interested in the pupils' perceptions as there appeared to be a disparity between the adult perceptions of the school experience and values and those of the children (Greene and Hill, 2005). The Head Teacher gave full support to the project; however, she moved schools three months into the project and while the replacement Head Teacher was supportive, she had different priorities and was less involved. This is reflected by issues raised by the children which are discussed in Chapter 6. The

change in leadership contributed to my decision not to include the class teachers' interviews that originally formed part of the research design as I felt that their anonymity could not be maintained leaving the adult participants in a vulnerable position (Walford, 2001).

The research is set in a two-form entry Church of England city primary school in the South of England with a diverse population, in terms of culture, ethnicity and family background (educational and financial). While the school is affiliated to the Church of England, many faiths are represented in the school community and the school has worked hard to reconcile this into creating a vibrant and respectful community. Rather than adopting Fundamental British Values (FBV) (DfE, 2014a) unquestioningly, the school chose to support their commitment to the UNCRC (UNGA, 1989), using FBV to support the UNCRC rather than foregrounding FBV, thus avoiding alienating sections of their school community (Struthers, 2016).

My research critically examines the participants' perceptions and stories about the school values of Love, Honesty, Hope and Forgiveness in the context of their school and the impact of these on the school environment. As the research progressed, it became apparent that my research would also call into question whether a values transmission model is conducive to a democratic school experience (Kohlberg and Hersh, 1977; Glasser, 1986). I recognised that rather than focusing on the school values, it was essential to identify the children's values using a Constructivist approach and PCT processes (Kelly, 1991; Denicolo *et al.*, 2016).

The children are central to this research; their ideas were considered in the research design. Furthermore the purpose of the study is to understand their perspectives and beliefs about the school values, the school experience and their own personal values (Jadue Roa *et al.*, 2018). The research was conducted over a month in the summer term, having spent one day a week throughout the academic year working with both Year 4 classes. This was to develop trusting relationships in which all felt they could contribute to authentically, both in the design of the research and participation in the research (Emond, 2005; Greene and Hill, 2005).

While reflecting on the literature for this project, I became aware of the exclusion of children from research using PCT approaches, and also when researching values in school. I became interested in PCT during the early taught part of my degree and wondered how it could be adapted to work with primary age children. Much of the PCT literature suggests the complexity of the method would prevent children under 10 years old from accessing PCT approaches (Fransella and Bannister, 1977). I was drawn towards PCT due to the simplicity and adaptability of the approach of empowering people to tell their own stories (Pope and Denicolo, 2001) and part of my research agenda was to adapt PCT for children. Children seemed to have been discounted from discussions about values;

their input into the literature was as objects of research, being observed for perceived stages of moral development as gauged by adults (Piaget, 1997; Kohlberg, 1981). Literature suggests that children enter school as *tabula rasa* awaiting the edifying forces of school to create moral beings (Skinner, 1974) or as sinful creatures waiting to be reformed by government funded initiatives such as character education (Bragg and Manchester, 2017).

## **Structure of the report**

The key research questions for this thesis are:

- How do a group of Year 4 children interpret their school values which are manifested in their daily school lives?
- What are the children's views about their school values upon which their school ethos and behaviour policy is based?
- To what extent are the school values internalised and how relevant do the pupils feel they are to them?
- How do the children respond to the dominant discourse and the school stated values?

This thesis addresses these questions through the following process. Chapter 2 begins by exploring the philosophical foundations of values in education, situating the issue as an ongoing concern. It then explores concepts of morality and values, investigating the definitions of these terms and the development of them, extending this into the differences between values education, citizenship, moral education and character education. This chapter concludes with the current place of virtue education in England.

In Chapter 3 I state my world view as a researcher. I discuss and justify the Constructivist approach and the decision to adopt PCT and Constructive Alternativism (Kelly, 1991) as an approach by which to gather my data. I present the ethical issues particular to researching with children and justify the importance of using their voices throughout. Chapter 4 presents how I planned and conducted the research, using Self-Characterisations, exploring the school values in small groups using dyadic elicitation (Fransella and Bannister, 1977) and the Repertory Grid Technique (RGT) (Kelly, 1991).

Chapter 5 is an introduction to the participants in their own words and pictures. I felt that this was essential to include before the findings and analysis to present the children as individuals and not only valuable for their data, acknowledging the impact they had on shaping the research as well as the data.

Chapter 6 presents the findings from the Self-Characterisations, the values group work and the RGTs using different methods. The Self-Characterisations are analysed against the framework of the protective factors as identified by Henderson and Milstein (2003) as the themes highlighted by the children aligned with these. The group work is analysed looking at commonalities between the children's interpretations of the school values and the school's intended meaning. The RGTs are analysed using the corollaries theorised by Kelly (1991) and using the participant's own conclusions.

The final chapter summarises the key findings and central themes of the research in the context of the literature and methodology. I present my contribution to knowledge both in terms of the research approach and in the perspectives presented by the children. I consider my own learning and development as a researcher and present the limitations which I identified. I complete this final section with recommendations for practice. While it is not customary to acknowledge the appendices in the main body of the thesis, I feel it essential to note that the children's Self-Characterisations are presented in their entirety under their pseudonyms in line with the ethos of this research acknowledging my respect and appreciation for all their ideas and work, not just those sections which answered my research questions.

## **Chapter 2**

### **The place of values in the educational curriculum**

In this chapter I critically evaluate the context of moral education considering philosophers who have influenced educational thinking. I establish the definitions, and purpose of values education, character education and moral education and evaluate approaches adopted by schools which are concerned with creating good citizens. I further discuss theories concerned with how children develop their own values, attempting to assess whether values are 'taught' or 'caught'. Finally, I address the implications of a critical discussion of the literature in relation to my study, particularly in relation to the lack of other research which consults children on values and values education. The intertwined nature of morality, values, citizenship and character means that in this chapter I necessarily revisit the views of key authors in the different sections.

#### **Values**

This section presents an overview of what values are and how they are developed in children, exploring the role which schools play in this development through values clarification and values transmission approaches.

Warnock (1996) describes values simply as that which we like or dislike. She emphasises the shared nature of values rather than merely individualistic liking or disliking of something, which she would identify as a preference rather than a value. She defines values as being concerned with others and wider society and describes the difficulty in finding truly common values which are not enforced by law. By contrast Halstead and Taylor (1996) present values as something perceived as good combined with individual preferences (or likes) and social choices. Put simply, values can be defined as the beliefs that people hold about the nature of good (and, conversely, evil).

Kohlberg and Hersh (1977) critique the idea of schools as values free institutions suggesting that to be values free is impossible. They suggest that this results in a simplistic and ineffective approach which ignores stages of moral development. The impossibility of schools being value free is supported by Woolley (2010) who describes the enculturation of children in schools according to the lived ethos of the school. Kohlberg and Hersh (1977: 54) define character education as a 'bag of virtues' with teachers transmitting their own values and imposing their beliefs on the child. They propose instead values clarification whereby children are encouraged to develop the skills to recognise that people have different values and to explore and clarify their own personal values.

Kohn (1997) also notes that schools are underpinned by values, quite often by values which may have been previously called the hidden curriculum. Giroux and Penna (1979:22) define the hidden curriculum as the implicit 'norms, values and beliefs' which school staff transmit to their pupils and relates to the unspoken expectations of the classroom and relationships with others. Every time children are welcomed into the classroom, how we do so as teachers will be infused with our values and the ethos of our classrooms (Woolley, 2010). Kohn notes that we are always teaching values in a classroom, not necessarily through a set programme, but more realistically through the way we model relationships and conflict (Kohn, 1997). He (1997) notes that personal values of the teacher may not always align completely with the values of the school. When this occurs the adoption of imposed values can result in difficulties due to a mismatch in belief and practice (Porter, 2014).

Halstead and Taylor (2000) suggest that while morals develop early on in childhood, they enable the child to develop, clarify and justify their own values. They identify a number of non-school influences which play a part in developing the child's values including family, peers, community, other agencies, and the media. This suggests an environmental influence on an internal belief system (Bowlby, 1997; Mercer, 2018). Apart from the media (which can include literature and music), all other influences are relationship-based and Halstead and Taylor (2000) note that while the media appears to have some influence, the effect on children's values seems unclear, although this aspect may need examining due to the widespread use of social media. Halstead and Taylor (2000) suggest that the development of values is developed implicitly through relationships and everyday social interactions. The growing diversity of values means that schools must offer the opportunity of discussing stories and situations to enable children to develop and clarify their own personal values explicitly (Halstead and Taylor, 2000).

The attitude towards the development of children's values appears to be influenced by the theorist's definition of values. Lickona (1996) views character education as the vehicle for developing core ethical values, and, subsequently, moral thinking and action. Kohn (1997) supports this but argues that character education is an ineffective delivery tool for teaching values due to the focus on conformity and obedience rather than intrinsically encouraging development through reflection. While seemingly promoting the importance of intrinsic motivation, Lickona (1996) describes a transmission approach of the development of values. He asserts the need for schools to have defined *the* core values which all members of the school are obligated to adopt. This appears to link more with a didactic approach to values education than the Socratic values clarification of Kohlberg and Hersh (1977). Roth (2015) notes the importance of developing thinking skills in children as a way of improving both academic results and behaviour through a Kantian approach to their moral development. He proposes that knowledge without thought can only result in a recollection of facts

rather than a considered response. The values clarification route would seem more aligned with this focus on teaching children to think rather than conforming to the externally imposed values of character education (Lickona, 1996). The role of thinking in the development of morals, values and character appears a key theme with philosophers, with Plato, Kant and Dewey believing that a moral action can only be the result of moral thinking and that without thought it is merely obeying an externally imposed set of rules (Plato, 1956; Kant, 1996; Dewey, 1975). The Socratic or values clarification approach enables the internalisation of values and moral attitude. It could be said that externally imposed morality is like learning and delivering a speech in a foreign language; there would be no understanding of what was being said or why, merely a representation of what a third party has directed the speaker to say.

### **What is morality?**

Morality can be defined as the personal reflection of the individual on the principles concerned with discerning between right and wrong, or good and bad behaviour. It can be concerned with judging the morality of others or categorising and justifying one's own actions (Gert, 2005). Comenius aligned morality with virtue, describing it as a state of being, with the external behaviour reflecting the internal state (Komenský, 1910). For Kant (1996), morality is not in the action, but in the will of the action being performed from duty, regardless of the end result. Kohlberg (1981) states that the morality of an action is dependent on the situation but that an action itself is not 'moral'. Dewey (1975) describes moral ideas as those which inform and moderate good conduct. He also notes that these ideas do not inherently lead to morality, it is the lived experience which encourages this.

Durkheim *et al.* (1961) consider secular morality as the conduit for moral education, which replaces the duty to God with the duty to fellow man (sic). The secular morality of Durkheim *et al.* (1961) is founded on discipline and attachment to social groups. This idea is further developed by proposing that every society has a shared moral code, while noting that this will differ between societies and communities, thus leading to a difficulty in a secular morality shared by all (Durkheim *et al.*, 1961).

Collins (2008) acknowledges that morals exist in some form in every religious community, describing them as a code of conduct shared by that community. He presents three strands of morality, the first concerned with demonstrating due respect to sacred objects and (in Christianity) respecting the Sabbath. The second, while to some extent replaced or supported by legislation, is concerned with obeying the rules of social conduct. The third is Asceticism, which can be defined as eschewing sensual pleasures in the pursuit of extreme spirituality. While this is most easily exemplified by those who choose to live in a religious community, Collins (2008:11) also uses the example of 'asceticism-in-the-world', proposing that this could be typified by extremist actions driven by a moral code. Midgley



(2003) presents the conflict around human rights and human morality, particularly around the notion that human rights are more aligned with human wrongs. She suggests that legislation could raise questions around development of morality, since precepts are imposed by governments or religious organisations due to the perceived inadequacy of humans to self-regulate. Midgley (2003) reiterates the difficulty of finding a single moral theory, and perhaps the futility of trying to do so.

The concept of moral relativism holds that development of morality is dependent on the social norms; thus no one moral perspective can be viewed as universal or as superior to any other (Durkheim *et al.*, 1961; Dewey, 1975). While this may appear to be an inclusive approach, this can be problematic, particularly in cases where abuse may be justified as morally appropriate to a certain society (Graham *et al.*, 2016). In contrast, moral absolutism presents the idea that there is an absolute, universal right and wrong (White, 2014). Many world religions take a moral absolutist perspective (Alexander, 1995).

### **Philosophical foundations of values in education**

The promotion of moral and spiritual development through education is not a new initiative. Plato (c427-347 BC) and Aristotle (364-322 BC) both proposed the importance of moral development, albeit from slightly differing angles. Aristotle presents the importance of the practical application of virtues leading to *eudaimonia* or flourishing (2014). Plato suggests that rather than the practical interpretation, moral development is limited to the philosophical consideration of virtues and truths (2013). Both concurred that some type of moral education was important in order to produce good citizens and effective leaders.

Plato (2013), Aristotle (2014), Kant (2001) and Comenius (1910) present moral education as an essential component of the achievement of a greater good. Aristotle (2014) and Plato (2013) consider the creation of good citizens for a successful society. Kant (2001) and Comenius (1910) desire the creation of people suitable for the kingdom of heaven. Other differences reflect on whether the purpose of moral education is to create obedient subjects or participating and thinking citizens (Plato, 2013; Aristotle, 2014; Kant, 1996; Komenský, 1910).

Rorty (1998) suggests that philosophies of education may be placed into three main categories, theories of knowledge; political education and moral education. This suggests that the three can be separated, but it is unclear how these can be separated as they are intertwined. The philosophy of Locke, for example, writing in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, was underpinned by his political beliefs, in particular the stark differences he proposed in education for the children of the poor and for the sons (sic) of gentlemen (Rorty, 1998). He believed that children of the poor aged 3-14 should be taught a trade in a working school in order to develop independent means with which to repay their benefactors and

demonstrate their gratitude. A useful by-product of this was that their parents would be able to work as they would not have to stay at home to look after their children, thus becoming contributing members of society (Rorty, 1998). Locke also notes that the children at the working schools can be taken to church by their school masters to develop morality and religious knowledge (Locke, 1880). This contrasts with the more privileged classes whom Locke felt should be taught theories of knowledge in order to rule and maintain order in civil society (Locke, 1880). Locke proposed that no learning could take place without development of virtue. Using Locke as an example demonstrates the difficulty in viewing education as having a single purpose. The purposes of education will differ according to the philosopher or curriculum maker's political beliefs and personal values.

The writing of Kant reflects a democratic approach to education (Kant, 1996; Kant, 2001). Kant (2001) suggests that rational beings can determine their own ends and can follow moral law. He postulates that people only act in an authentically moral way when performing moral actions through moral intentions. This suggests an action driven by intrinsic motivation, not due to the anticipation of a reward or punishment (Kant, 1996). Unlike Locke, (1880) Kant (2001) warns against an extrinsically administered moral education

Man may be either broken in, trained and mechanically taught, or he may be really enlightened [...] horses and dogs are broken in [...] it is of greater importance that they [people] shall learn to think. (Kant, 2001: 20)

Kant (2001) differs from Locke (1880) in recognising the importance of education for all. He also points out the expense of this, suggesting that the money spent on education would be better sent to the families directly. He proposes that the initial stage of education serves to manage the 'restraining unruliness' of the child (Kant 2001: 18). He highlights the importance of culture in the development of the child's understanding. Kant describes the final stage as refinement or an ability to conduct oneself in society with moral training running alongside all stages of the child's education (Kant, 2001).

Dewey (1966) presents the importance of a democratic approach in the classroom. Dewey (1966) proposes that a democratic society concerns itself with education due to its interest in creating a society where citizens are able to live and work together. The two main drivers of his ethos were working collaboratively towards the common good, and enabling individuals to consider the perspectives and experiences of those perceived as different from themselves (Gordon, 2016; Dewey, 1966). These ideas can be seen reflected throughout education systems, whether being taught implicitly or explicitly (Kant, 2001; Plato, 2013; Komenský, 1910). Glasser (1986) continues to develop the idea of educating for citizenship, by promoting a democratic approach in the classroom to develop the skills needed in society. This could include key character traits identified by Gibb which will be discussed later in the chapter (DfE, 2015). Woolley (2010) links democracy with

citizenship and participation with teachers making choices to work in a collaborative rather than autocratic way with their learners towards a 'common good' (Woolley, 2010: 66).

Freire (1996), in contrast, critiques the ways in which states devise and implement education systems in order to develop and control compliant citizens. He questions the idea of imposing values on the school community rather than developing them with the stakeholders. The imposition of values links to Freire's 'banking' concept of education which, rather than developing critical consciousness, serves to dehumanise and create obedient and unquestioning subjects. Dewey (1996) raises the question as to whether the type of 'teaching them what to think' education is to encourage the formation of an autocratic society to prevent the growth of personal freedom and responsibility. Carr (1991) refers to the difference between educating good citizens or creating good subjects. Perhaps this question should be the driver in schools for selecting the purpose of moral, virtues, values or character education within their own settings.

Chater (2000) cautions that values education, moral education, citizenship and Personal, Social and Health Education can exist as strategies which impose the 'correct' externally devised morals on the children. Similarly, Carr (1991) identifies externally devised programmes as imposing social and moral constraint on the individual. Each of these ways of thinking about values can be developed in either authoritarian or democratic frameworks and in schools can be implemented alongside authoritarian approaches (Skinner, 1974). An attempt to combine incompatible authoritarian and democratic theories may result in confusing and ultimately unsuccessful practice due to a lack of conviction in their teaching approach on the part of the teacher (Porter, 2014). Chater (2000) also highlights the importance of ownership by the educator, both of the content and the teaching approach. Woolley (2010) describes authoritarian approaches to education as the antithesis to democratic learning. He views the authoritarian approaches as concerned with negativity rather than with 'Active participants' and 'Recognised partners' (Woolley, 2010: 74). This raises a question as to whether schools which adopt a democratic approach to learning need to deliver values education due to an intrinsically developed moral code (Glasser, 1992). Schools adopting a more authoritarian approach may benefit from more explicit teaching of the values expected due to pupils being less able to cope without extrinsic motivators or guidance (Skinner, 1974).

### **Development of Morals**

The educational and societal question of how to make children good members of society is steeped in philosophical discussion throughout history. Plato (1956) discusses the difficulty of identifying whether virtue can be taught, due to the impossible task of identifying what virtue is. He concludes that it is a combination of knowledge and right opinion leading to virtuous action, but that it is not

acquired or natural, but a virtuous instinct which guides action. Aristotle (2014) states that while virtue of thought comes from teaching, virtue of character derives from habit and is concerned with feelings, action and thought, distinguishing virtue of intellect from virtue of character. Comenius, builds on the idea of developing virtues through action proposing that, in the early stages, knowledge, piety and virtue are developed through prayer, education and action (Komenský, 1910). He describes schools as 'workshops of humanity' (Komenský, 1910: 71) suggesting school should be a place where moral beings are created and proposes that piety and virtue should be taught through action and gentleness rather than through violence. Comenius notes the importance of the teacher exemplifying virtue using a nurturing approach demonstrating a genuine interest in the child and through finding what motivates the child to teach in the way most suited to them. He also advocates learning the catechisms, psalms, bible stories and verses by heart to cultivate their morality (Komenský, 1910).

Kant (2001) ostensibly adopts a more Socratic method to moral education, proposing that it is more important and effective to teach a child to think than to break a child's will so that he or she submits to the commonly held values and morals unquestioningly. This is underpinned by his view that people only act morally when performing good actions through moral intentions. Kant (2001) suggests that the skills to be taught are to draw moral conclusions, espousing moral actions as the result of intrinsic motivation rather than extrinsic. His views align with those of Comenius in defining education as a combination of nurture, discipline and moral training (Komenský, 1910). However, Kant (2001) questions whether younger children are capable of making moral decisions, proposing that the first things children should learn at school are to sit still and follow the teacher's instructions exactly to prepare them for learning how to think.

Dewey (1975) refers to Plato's (1956) concern with the difficulty of teaching morals or how to be virtuous, due to the complexity of the definitions of the terms. Dewey (1975) asserts that morals are developed through habitual action rather than through specific lessons and proposes the idea that the entire curriculum should be concerned with and based on moral development. Dewey (1975) notes that morals are developed through social interactions and through the child's environment. A moral relativist perspective links to the child developing virtues valued by those around them rather than a prescribed set of morals. He describes the way children learn through imitation, thus the habitual actions children copy lead to the internalisation of the morals held by the society around them. He asserts that distinct teaching of morals can only communicate to children what others think, not develop or instil morals. Dewey (1975) explains the idea that the individual nature of the child means that didactic teaching could only succeed in ensuring that all children had the same information about morality and virtues, not that they would experience the lived development of

morals. This concurs with the views of Comenius (Komenský, 1910) around creating the right conditions for the child to develop morally as well as academically. Dewey (1975) advocates discovery as a way of children developing their moral code rather than pouring information into the child, which, Dewey asserts, leads to a mechanical skill creating followers rather than curious learners. Woolley (2010) supports this view, proposing that children learn to develop their own moral code through their own experiences and mistakes through a nurturing approach from their educators.

Piaget (1997) takes a different approach, proposing that that moral development comprises three distinct stages. In the first stage (age three to six) the child has no obligation to follow rules. This is followed by a morality of constraint (age six to nine) during which children begin to view rules as externally imposed and unalterable. During the third stage children view rules as changeable through mutual consent and negotiation. This reflects Piaget's view of the development from egocentrism to co-operation and recognition of existence in a social context (Mercer, 2018). It is interesting that moral development, according to Piaget (1997), is constructed around the obeying of rules and views on justice. This appears to be a much simplified and superficial view compared with the complexities presented by Plato and Dewey.

Kohlberg's theory (1981) builds upon the work of Piaget (1997) and proposes six stages of moral reasoning (later reduced to five). The first stage of moral reasoning is concerned with punishment and obedience. The second stage is individualistic and acting in a self-serving way. This leads onto stage three in which the moral reasoning extends to close friends and family (Kohlberg, 1981). Stage four generalises the moral code, recognising the legal requirements imposed on society, and appears similar to Piaget's second stage. This would support the fifth stage in which people question rules in order to build a just society. Stage six, which was revised and removed in 1987 (Carpendale *et al.*, 2018), considers all moral positions, checking fairness from all perspectives. Critics of Kohlberg's work refer to the need for more research, but also question the notion that once a child has moved onto a stage there is no regression to an earlier stage (Carpendale *et al.*, 2018). The inability to regress appears to ignore the role of emotion in moral reasoning, in conflict with Aristotle (2014). Halstead and Taylor (2000) assert that children develop ideas about morality as early as two years old, developing discontinuously as a result of relationships, play and discussion of feelings, particularly influenced by the family. This perspective suggests that concepts of morality are age related, but take into consideration a constructivist approach.

Carr (1991) highlights the polarised approaches to moral development, with the behaviourist approach encouraging conformity and the expectation that children will respond to a stimulus in a

habitual and prespecified way due to the external forces imposed upon them. This habitual response to an authoritarian approach proposes that children would learn the correct or moral way to behave as a result of this action, the opposite of a democratic approach (Woolley, 2010). Carr (1991) identifies that, while behaviourist approaches are enthusiastically embraced by schools (Greene, 2016) there is little evidence to suggest that it is effective as there is no acknowledgement of the place of agency or feeling in this response. The behaviourist approach suggests that children behave in a conditioned response, not through a moral response which is described as a “blind conformity” or indoctrination (Carr, 1991). This revisits the question of whether a virtuous act can still be considered moral or virtuous if performed only as a result of duty or obligation (Carr, 1991; Kant, 1996).

### **Defining Values, Citizenship, Moral and Character Education**

Arthur (2005) notes the interchangeability of the terms character education, moral education and values education. He views this as somewhat, but not solely dependent upon the politics of governing political parties. For the purposes of this literature review, I will present the definitions and discussions around these terms and attempt to differentiate between them.

Both Warnock (1996) and Halstead and Taylor (1996) describe the difficulties presented when considering values education. They present the notion that there is an underlying assumption that a pluralistic society such as Britain (Arthur, 2005) can have a set of shared values, perceiving values as a fixed term, something that people ‘have’. This concurs with Dewey’s perception that school values concern themselves with the values of the adults rather than the values held by the children (Dewey, 1975). In 1995, the Values Education Council defined values education as being a lifelong process of learning about and developing values. They proposed using this process to become considerate participants in a pluralistic society and were centrally concerned with children’s personal reflections on their feelings and values (Carr, 1997; Halstead and Taylor, 1996). Powney *et al* (1995) describe values education as the transmission of values from teacher to pupil and define values as including a moral and religious belief engaging at a cognitive, emotional and behavioural level. This is problematic as it assumes that teachers hold the correct and unquestionable values which the children must adopt. The Values Based Education group (2019) present a framework which acknowledges the importance of a values led curriculum led by adults who model behaviour such as respect, honesty, integrity and compassion, (Hawkes, 2006). This echoes and develops the proposal by Powney *et al*. (1995) that thinking and debating skills are an essential part of values education. Arthur (2005) suggests that values education is depicted as being linked to critical thinking and human development, presenting ideas for children to develop their own moral code. He proposes

that values education developed as a result of progressive education and that, as such, lacks substantive content.

### **Defining Citizenship**

Annette (2000) describes citizenship as a political response to developing civic and moral responsibility and suggests the difficulty with providing a definition resides within the changes in political agenda. Westheimer (2015) defines three essential aspects of Citizenship education as developing personal responsibility, encouraging participation and a sense of social justice, acknowledging that this may not be a universal understanding. Plato (2013) defines citizens as people who live in the state and differentiates by considering what makes a good citizen and considers those who do not act virtuously as not deserving the privilege of being a citizen of the state.

The Advisory Group for Citizenship (AGC) proposed that Citizenship Education was developed with the aim of making positive changes to young people's attitudes, behaviours and dispositions encouraging them to develop self-confidence and socially and morally responsible behaviour (Advisory Group for Citizenship (AGC), 1998). The initiative developed from the Labour white paper *Excellence in School* (Department for Education and Employment (DfEE), 1997). The paper identified the need to strengthen education for citizenship and the teaching of democracy. As a result of these reports Citizenship was made a statutory subject in Key Stages three and four with non-statutory guidelines for Key Stages one and two in 2002 (Department for Education and Employment and Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (DfEE and QCA), 1999), with PSHE becoming PSHE and Citizenship (PSHCE). This has remained in the 2013 National Curriculum (DfE, 2013), but there appear to have been changes in the approach. The *Crick Report* (AGC, 1998), highlights the difference between a good subject and a good citizen. It expounds the importance of developing skills of enquiry and communication alongside knowledge and understanding about becoming informed citizens with the skills of participation and responsible actions. The report proposes that, in primary schools, children should form their own attitudes towards rules and democracy through discussion, example and reflection. This links to Plato's philosophy of teaching children to ask questions to develop their own understanding (Plato, 2013). While the *Crick Report* recommended that Citizenship Education should be reported on by Ofsted, it also acknowledged that the broad range of teaching approaches and learning opportunities which could meet this requirement, could provide challenges with the assessment of teaching. The House of Commons Education and Skills Committee (2007) noted a waning of interest from the government on Citizenship education. They reported that this had led to a lack of clarity and ministerial guidance with no strategy. Jerome and

Kisby (2019) suggest that this is a deliberate marginalisation by policy makers due to the incompatibility of citizenship with a right wing agenda. Cairns (2000) highlights a lack of teacher training as a contributing factor to the incoherency of the approach in schools. While the 2013 National Curriculum has maintained the inclusion of Citizenship Education, the aims appear much narrower. It requires knowledge of the UK government, laws and systems to be taught rather than an understanding of the global community and their different types of government and economic systems (DfE, 2013). The non-statutory Key Stage one and two Citizenship guidance appears to almost replicate the PSHE curriculum with the inclusion of parts of the body, puberty and personal hygiene as part of the citizenship guidance. It appears that PSHE and Citizenship are where issues are placed when curriculum makers cannot find anywhere else to place them; this could have led to the lack of clarity and coherence noted by the House of Commons Education and Skills Committee (2007).

### **Defining Moral Education**

Ofsted (2018) define moral education as being able to differentiate between right and wrong, to understand the law and to demonstrate awareness of consequences. The investigation of moral and ethical issues is also included in this definition. It could be suggested that moral education through the use of fairy tales pre-dates the school approach to developing morals, but uses a similar approach of instilling stories which illustrate the importance of adhering to moral guidelines and the consequences when these rules are ignored (Thorne-Thomsen, 1903). Bayer (2017) suggests that moral education takes the Socratic approach in training humans to be able to use reason rather than passion. The term moral education appears to have been used more widely in the 1960s and 1970s (Ward, 1969; Wilson, 1972; Hirst, 1974) with the term becoming used more recently as part of character education (Eaude, 2016). Dewey (1975) presents direct instruction for moral education as ineffective. He states that moral education is concerned with every subject and every interaction the child may have in school, encouraging the child to become a thinking individual as part of a democratic society. Dewey (1966) describes the direct instruction model as an authoritarian model and designed for the control of many by the few (Freire, 1996; Woolley, 2010). Arthur (2005) proposes that the definition of moral education presents conflict as the definition would depend on whether the education was aligned with moral absolutism or moral relativism which may be based on the political climate.

In the current English education curriculum, moral education has become part of the Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural (SMSC) development strand (Ofsted, 2018). With the creation of Ofsted in 1992, inspectors were required to report on the SMSC provision and development within schools



(Peterson *et al.*, 2014) which built on the intentions of the *1944 Education Act*. While the introduction of the inspection of SMSC means that all schools must provide evidence that they are meeting the requirements, it still appears a nebulous area with one head-teacher describing it as something immeasurable, but evident through seeing it in the ethos of the school (Peterson *et al.*, 2014). Many schools have adopted a Rights Respecting approach (UNICEF, 2018) to meet this requirement and work towards a Rights Respecting School Award in order to support the development of SMSC. Rights Respecting approaches adopt the underpinning values and principles of the UNCRC.

Pring (1984) divides moral education into five separate categories, highlighting the complexity of this approach. He first presents morality as rational development which links to Kohlberg (1981) and Piaget (1997) and notes the cognitive aspect of this type of development while acknowledging the difficulties with a shared moral code. The second aspect presented by Pring (1984) is that of Morality as Behaving Correctly (Pring, 1984). Whereas moral development is concerned with what a child thinks, Morality as Behaving Correctly acts as a representation of their moral code; this however does not take into account the dissonance between thoughts and behaviour (Kant, 1996). The third component identified by Pring (1984) is Moral Content which proposes teaching children how to think and consider, using the values clarification model (Kohlberg and Hersh, 1977; Halstead and Taylor, 2000). Unlike Kohlberg's model (Kohlberg, 1981), Pring (1984) presents Moral Disposition as a further ingredient of morality which takes account of the place of feelings for oneself and others and the environmental factors which have created the child's disposition (Bowlby, 1997). The final aspect is identified as autonomy (Pring, 1984) which describes having and acting upon principles without external guidance which aligns with Plato's idea of the good citizen (Plato, 2013).

### **Defining Character Education**

Arthur (2005) discusses the re-emergence of character education ten years prior to the re-re-emergence of character education under the conservative government of 2014. He notes the similarities between government policy and character education from 1949 to the proposals in 2001 (Arthur, 2005).

The most recent iteration was launched in 2014, with a pledge to become a 'global leader in teaching character, resilience and grit' (DfE, 2014b). The launch was accompanied by a tranche of funding for organisations seen to promote this approach, and for research into effective ways of delivering this. The DfE define character education as any activities which promote and develop positive attributes and character traits in pupils (DfE, 2019). This appears a vague and unhelpful

definition in some ways for schools keen to meet Ofsted requirements, lending little direction. However, this definition may also allow schools the flexibility of opting out of a prescriptively taught form of character education (NatCen Social Research & the National Children's Bureau Research and Policy Team (NCSR & NCBaPT) 2017). The DfE (2014b), in a press release, stated that the government would draw on the successful approaches in independent schools and on the Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP), an American initiative designed to improve character, being delivered at the time of writing in 224 schools across America. Aristotle (2014) defines character as an active condition which is stable and motivates a person to act in a certain way, which can be negative as well as positive (Aristotle, 2014). Aristotle (2014) establishes that while virtue of thought comes from teaching, virtue of character comes from habit and is concerned with feelings, action and thought, distinguishing virtue of intellect from virtue of character. Arthur (2005) proposes that character education has traditionally been linked to behaviourist, didactic approaches which are concerned with the restraining and retraining instinctive behaviour. This is a view supported by Kohn (1997) who presents character education as promoting the belief that virtues are not to be challenged or questioned. He suggests that such schemes encourage conformity, with children rewarded, not for working through issues, but providing the correct (teacher held) response and behaviour and places this with a right-wing religious ideology (Jerome and Kisby, 2019). It is pertinent that the materials written for character education and promoted by the current UK government are written by a Christian social reform organisation. James Arthur, Centre Director of the Jubilee Centre presents a strong bias to only appoint people who adhere to his principles and values, suggesting a lack of balance or criticality towards the materials being presented (Jerome and Kisby, 2019).

Suissa notes the concerns of character education with individualism. She suggests that character education lays the problems of society at the feet of the individual rather than teaching children of the power of political thinking through the question 'how people like us are to live together' promoting the case for Citizenship Education (2015: 110). Kohn (1997) suggests that formal character education schemes are concerned with the idea that children are inherently bad, needing to be made good through moral teachings. Greene (2016) warns against the teaching of might as being right, both for the risk to children identified as vulnerable and promoting an ethos where it is expected that children should unquestioningly obey those who are bigger, older or more powerful than them.

Kohn presents character education as having a broad intention, which helps develop children into 'good' people (Kohn, 1997), with a more specific intention as an explicit approach to the teaching of morals (Kohn, 1997). The former intention is one which, it could be argued has been part of primary school education and would very likely be proposed as most teachers as one of their main aims (Hall

and Simeral, 2015). The latter intention is the more formal character education which schools are being encouraged to adopt through schemes promoted by the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues.

While discussing moral, values and character education, political and religious themes reoccur through the debate. It is therefore important to now contextualise the place of virtues-based education in the historical context of English education to explore some of the legal, political and religious tensions which have influenced the education of children since 1870 when compulsory schooling was introduced for all children between the ages of five and ten.

### **Historical context of Education in England since the 1870 Education Act in relation to values education**

The *Education Act* of 1870 was the first British legislation to concern itself with educational provision of the nation's children. It acknowledged the position of voluntary schools (schools governed and funded by the Church of England) and set up Board Schools in areas where they were required. Under the Act all children between the ages of five and ten had to attend school. Under section fourteen of the Act, known as the *Cowper-Temple Clause* there was no requirement in a Board School for pupils to attend Sunday schools and the act stated that no denominational religious teaching should be taught in school. Additionally, pupils could be withdrawn from any religious observance and the timings of these were at the end or beginning of the day to enable this to happen. Under the act there was no duty to inspect religious instruction.

The *1902 Education Act* attempted to provide a level playing field by abolishing all school boards and instituting Local Education Authorities while funding the predominantly Anglican voluntary schools (Robinson, 2002). Rogers (1959) reports the controversy caused by this act and the conflict between the Anglican church and the non-denominational movement. The Anglican church held the belief that schools had a duty to perform God's will to avoid a 'de-Christianisation' of English society (Rogers, 1959: 33). Conversely, prior to the Act, in 1889 the nonconformists joined with the Liberal party to create the National Education Association between 1888 and 1920 (Eaglesham, 1962). The association promoted a non-sectarian and progressive education system in response to the dominant influence of the Anglican Church on the government's response to the education of children (Gullifer, 1982). In reality the Act meant that children in areas where there was only a Church school would receive the available denominational education (Black, 1990). The right to withdraw from religious instruction in the 1870 Act was considered unenforceable. Rogers cites enquiries which showed that withdrawal resulted in unfavourable treatment of the child and describes them as being 'persecuted' (Rogers, 1959: 44). In contrast, Pugh (1968) proposes that

much of the controversy was political and that in actuality many parishes found compromise and inter-church schools worked together in a collaborative way, with both Anglicans and Non-Anglicans working alongside each other on some school boards.

The *1944 Education Act* embraced a democratic approach with cross-party support (Batteson, 1999). It stated that:

it shall be the system of duty of the local education authority for every area, so far as education. Their powers extend, to contribute towards the spiritual, moral, mental, and physical development of the community by securing that efficient education throughout those stages shall be available to meet the needs of the population of their area. (*The Education Act, 1944*)

This could appear to offer a flexible approach, dependent on the needs of the local population and as promoting a child centred approach, predating the progressive approach recommended by Plowden (Central Advisory Council for Education, 1967). However, it could be said that the 'efficient education' was to meet the needs of local industry most appropriate to the area (Bartlett and Burton, 2014). Religious education is mentioned ninety-five times in the document, stating the requirement of all schools to start the school day with an act of collective worship. The Act's explicit provision for formal and compulsory Religious Education is acknowledged by Miller (1955) as reflecting a 'constructive and helpful attitude towards Christian education' (Miller, 1955:365). There are no stipulations regarding any other school subject in the document apart from Physical Education, thus reflecting the pressure on Butler to recognise the continuing influence and power of the Anglican churches (Freathy, 2007). Clarke (1945) notes the many revolutionary aspects of the act, but also notes that regarding the daily worship 'Even among devout people who desire such things there is some misgiving about the possible consequences of enforcing them by law.' (Clarke, 1945:185). This concern reflects the conflict between the Association for Education in Citizenship who proposed a democratic, secular approach to education and the Christian Educationalists (Freathy, 2007). The opposition to a democratic pluralistic approach to education was presented as a danger in post-war society as it would allow state ideologies to radicalise the population without the spiritual guidance of the Anglican church. Eliot (1939) wrote that it was only Christianity which could engender the type of passion and belief in the British national identity which the Communist, fascist and Nazi movements had aroused in other European countries, thus proposing religious instruction necessary for a re-Christianisation of society.

The *Education Reform Act* (1988) maintains the enforcement of a daily act of worship, but there appears to be development from the 'efficient education' of the 1944 act to a broad and balanced curriculum which "promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of

pupils at the school and of society;" and "prepares such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life." with more emphasis on the pupil rather than the community. Other than that, the 1944 principles are almost replicated in this statement (*Education Reform Act, 1988*).

### **The Current Place of Values Education in England**

In 2005 the Labour Government were promoting the teaching of virtues in order to create 'citizens with character' (Arthur, 2005: 240). The current government have continued to develop this with the terms "character" and "virtue" becoming more widely used in governmental reports over the past five years. However, it appears that many primary schools do not use these terms, and continue to use the language of values with explicit links to Rights Respecting Education, SMSC development and more tenuous links to Fundamental British Values (NCSR & NCBAPT, 2017). This illustrates the dichotomy between the traditional ideology of knowledge which aligns with character as something which can be taught and the more progressive child centred ideologies which adopt a democratic approach acknowledging the importance of role models, thinking skills and relationships in the development of virtue (Bartlett and Burton, 2014). The former presents as more seemingly measurable than the latter which may make it a more appealing choice in a schools governed by accountability. Kohn (1997) identifies a conflict between a traditional approach to teaching values versus a constructivist approach suggesting that the character education model aligns with the traditional approach, underpinned by behaviourism, conservatism and religion.

The current iteration of the National Curriculum England (DfE, 2013) maintains that every state funded school should promote a broad and balanced curriculum and the purpose statement remains unchanged from the 1988 iteration (DfE, 2013; Ofsted, 2018). The provision for a daily act of collective worship and compulsory religious education for all pupils has remained, but the wording has changed from the requirement of all pupils attending in 1988 to provision being made for an act of collective worship. Schools have responded to this in a number of ways; assemblies are an efficient way of meeting this duty, however, the *Collective Worship in Schools* guidance (DfE, 1994) advises that if school assemblies are used in this way, they cannot be concerned with school affairs and that these must be kept distinct from the act of daily worship. Some authors explore the potential and actuality of school assemblies to deliver moral and spiritual education, possibly with a view to ensuring that SMSC requirements are met. Gill and Halstead (2000) suggest that collective worship could be seen as indoctrination with a lack of rational discussion and an unquestioning acceptance of ideas promoted by the person leading the assembly. Smith and Smith (2013), by contrast, appear to support the approach deeming it an effective way of the teaching of ethical

virtues. They describe the most successful assemblies they observed as those which combined the teaching of virtues with a use of cultural and religious resources. While Smith and Smith (2013) described these assemblies as successful, they do not clarify what criteria they were using other than their personal observations. No data was gathered from the staff or children as participants to evaluate the effectiveness of these assemblies; the observations only allowed an evaluation of what was delivered. In 2015 the Arts and Humanities Research Council proposed that the compulsory act of daily worship should be reviewed and that schools should do more to make their pupils and parents aware of the right to withdraw from acts of collective worship (Cumper and Mawhinney, 2015). This has echoes of the 1902 Education Act where the right to withdraw was seldom exercised, more so due to perceived prejudice rather than ignorance of the right to withdraw.

In contrast to the statutory requirement for the provision of a daily act of collective worship and requirement that schools must teach Religious Education, the National Curriculum (Department for Education, 2013) asserts that schools must make provision for Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE Association, 2019). The wording in the 2013 National Curriculum appears to offer more flexibility in their approach to including PSHE than in the more prescriptive approach to RE, which explicitly should be taught. However, from September 2020 health and relationships education will be statutory in all primary schools, thus encompassing the S and H of PSHE with the wellbeing agenda developing the personal, although this is not statutory at the current time (Department for Education, 2017). Wilkinson (2017) compares the system in Northern Ireland to Britain suggesting that the Conservative government has focused on academic rather than personal development resulting in the delaying of the statutory curriculum. She states that the 'bottom up' approach to developing statutory PSHEE and RSE in Northern Ireland prioritises the wellbeing of the pupils over traditional academic subjects, using experts rather than a 'top down' approach from the government (Wilkinson, 2017:613). The frequency of provision for PSHE is not suggested unlike the daily act of collective worship which must be 'made provision for' (DfE, 2013: 5).

The DfE strategy (2016) promotes an education which helps children to develop values and character traits to help them deal with changing society and future challenges in the workplace (DfE, 2016).

The English National Curriculum states that the aims of the National Curriculum are to provide 'pupils with an introduction to the essential knowledge that they need to be educated citizens. It introduces pupils to the best that has been thought and said' (Department for Education, 2013: 6). The idea of the educated citizen has spanned the centuries (Plato, 2013; Aristotle, 2014; Komenský, 1910; Dewey 1966). The current version of the National Curriculum (DfE 2013) focuses on a knowledge-based curriculum, which implies a different view of the aims of education. The themes of

happiness and virtue are instead recognised as integral parts of a school curriculum, which suggests recognition of the need to support the development of the whole child while avoiding the more prescriptive approaches such as Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (Department for Education and Skills (DfES), 2005). Schools are thereby allowed to select and develop their own approaches to promoting spiritual and moral development. With a duty being placed on the Secretary of State for Education to provide statutory relationship education from 2020 by the *Children and Social Work Act 2017*, this has precipitated guidance which proposes explicit lessons in resilience and mental health which may better link to Aristotle's ideas around happiness and virtues (Aristotle, 2014).

### **Rugby Values and Military Ethos**

The concept of values is discussed in government documentation only when linked to the word 'British' (DfE, 2014) which could suggest that educating through character formation is replacing the practice of developing personal values in our children. Gibb details three purposes of education as 'to grow our economy and nurture our culture...ensure that [children] have the character and sense of moral purpose to succeed' (DfE, 2015[online]). The DfE emphasises the importance of initiatives which develop 'core rugby values' in children and young people, identifying persistence, grit, optimism and curiosity as key character traits (DfE, 2014b). Kohn (1997) highlights the aim of some character education schemes as to support the development of the economy, and a notion of competition. The Rugby Football Union identifies rugby core values as Teamwork, Respect, Enjoyment, Discipline and Sportsmanship which align with conservation in Schwartz's circular model and the imposition of values rather than the more effective values clarification (Döring, 2010). The concept of "key character traits" is elaborated on in the character education initiative which was launched in 2014, drawing on the rugby values and military ethos (DfE, 2014). Wringe (2000) suggests this represents a social utility view, seeing children as a 'problem' who need to be 'fixed' in an authoritarian way for the benefit of the adults. There is a nebulous quality to the definitions of military ethos in the government reports; there is a suggestion that the ethos will instil leadership, discipline and teamwork, but no clear definition, just an underlying suggestion that it is a shared belief (Bragg and Manchester, 2017). The military ethos approach was being reinvigorated by the current Secretary of State for Education when he was the Secretary of State for Defence, this has developed into the Cadet Expansion Programme in 500 schools, with proposals to commission a review into developing military ethos more widely in schools (Ministry of Defence (MoD), 2018). The word discipline is relevant to this discussion as government advice on behaviour evolved from *Learning Behaviour; The Report of the Practitioners' Group on School Behaviour and Discipline* (Steer,

2005) into *Behaviour and Discipline in Schools* (DfE, 2016). The word appears to derive from the Latin verb *discere*, to learn, which fits well with the title of the Steer report (Steer, 2005). Bagley's 1914 description of "a quite similar subservience of the individual will to the will of the teacher" (Slee, 1995: 23) fits more comfortably with opinions which view discipline as a way of restoring order, linked to punishment and subordinating the learner (Śliwowski, 2018). Slee (1995) presents the links between Behaviourist operant conditioning, suggesting that this type of discipline has a specific purpose and that extrinsic methodologies develop a submissive and subservient approach rather than helping children develop their own moral compass and make decisions based on autonomous ethics in conflict with a democratic approach (Porter, 2014; Woolley, 2010). Ecclestone critiques the behavioural psychology approach, asserting that it is not possible to change behaviour without changing minds (2017). Kohn (1997) echoes this, presenting character education as part of a behaviourist approach where children become conditioned to behave well due to the reward. Glasser (1992) suggests that rewards, rather than improving behaviour, result in pupils viewing themselves as behaving for the rewards rather than through intrinsic motivation, so failing to see themselves as kind and caring individuals.

Little research exists to support the rugby values and military ethos provision. In their research assessing the effectiveness of the 'Commando Joe's' project in schools, Mills *et al.* (2015) comment on the observable features of observable change, such as compliance, but also acknowledge that changes were not sustained over the year despite consistent delivery of the programme. They present the complexity of analysing what had made any changes and suggested that role models had had the greatest impact. Much of the literature referenced by Mills *et al.* (2015) was concerned with the impact of physical activity on children in schools with no reference to the military aspect of the intervention, thus suggesting that the physical aspect of the intervention was the relevant change catalyst rather than the military approach. The research by Mills *et al.* (2015) was funded jointly by the DfE as the commissioning organisation with Commando Joe's as the service deliverers which requires limitations of bias to be acknowledged. In contrast, Bragg and Manchester (2017) conducted research into school ethos, presenting the deficit view of children needing external forces to cure them of their evil suggested by the Conservative government initiatives, and the strengths model where children are viewed as trustworthy and as having ownership in their school community. The government push for military ethos in schools (Bragg and Manchester, 2017) appears to be at odds with recent statistics which report between 4-5% of the total prison population (Ministry of Justice (MoJ), 2018) being ex-service personnel with a disproportionate number in prison for violent and sexual crimes. The percentage rises after the age of 40 through to 70+ with a higher rate of offending by ex-service personnel within this age range than those



offenders who were non-service personnel (MoJ, 2018). It could be suggested that military ethos instils compliance while serving, but that this behaviourist approach results in a difficulty to operate without firm extrinsic motivators (Green, 2004). It would be helpful to further break these statistics down to explore whether the 5% had been involved in young offending before joining the military, however I have been unable to access this information. The Howard League Foundation, in their report *No Veteran Left Behind* (The Howard League for Penal Reform, 2010), note the prevalence of mental health difficulties and substance misuse among veterans, possibly as a result of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and a difficulty to cope without the structure of the military. The media has reported on a number of high-profile cases recently of professional rugby players arrested for sexual offences, violence and substance misuse. It could be suggested that while core rugby values are adhered to while on the pitch, this is due to strict enforcement to these values by an extrinsic motivator (the referee). Rayner *et al* (2016) conducted research into the increased abuse received by rugby referees in England and highlighted the difficulty in recruiting referees as the result of abuse from players, coaches and spectators towards them. This could suggest that the core rugby values venerated by the government (Bragg and Manchester, 2017) are a nostalgic view or pre-professional rugby perspective (Rayner *et al.*, 2016) rather than a realistic representation of current rugby practice.

### **Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL)**

In contrast, the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning initiative (SEAL) (DfES, 2005) was the result of academic research and a two-year pilot which aimed to develop children's social, emotional and behavioural skills through exploring values and teaching skills (Banerjee, 2010). Gibb (2015) described the initiative as having failed, despite being well meaning, due to its link to the perceived departure from knowledge-based learning. It is unclear to which research he refers to support this view, whether this is the primary or the secondary initiative and other research would dispute this (Hallam, 2009; O'Leary *et al.*, 2012). Hallam (2009) acknowledges that the impact of any programme which purports to improve social, emotional and behavioural skills and attributes is difficult to research due to the variables such as school interpretation of schemes, the children involved, teachers' attitudes to the schemes and perspectives on success. This may lead to the question as to whether values and character traits are reliably measurable and lack of measurability could contribute to the reluctance of governments to support such initiatives due to accountability issues (McKown, 2017). In contrast with character education, anecdotal evidence suggests that many schools still use the SEAL materials or materials which have been developed from them (Lever, 2019).

## Resilience and Grit

The theme which seems to underpin both approaches is the desire to build resilience in children, termed *grit* in character education terms, but, ostensibly, a similar quality. Duckworth (2018) defines *grit* as possessing the passion and persistence to aim for long term goals. Resilience is defined in a number of ways, but the underpinning theme is possessing the ability to recover from and overcome adversity (Public Health England and UCL Institute of Health Equity, 2014). While persistence may be viewed as part of resilience (Seligman, 2011), Grotberg (1995) notes the broader nature of resilience and the essential quality of nurturing supportive relationships in order to develop resilience. Daniel *et al.* (1999) describe the six protective factors or domains needed for a child to become resilient; a secure base, social competencies, positive values, interests, friendship and education. Masten and Monn (2015) note the importance of the resilience of family structures in building resilience in the child and the way that negative relationships become a risk factor in the development of resilience rather than a protective factor. While resilience is promoted as a common sense approach (Daniel *et al.*, 1999), others suggest that the term is unquestioningly accepted and in need of a critical response (Garrett, 2016). Garrett (2016) suggests that resilience is based in values judgement and too concerned with making changes within the individual. However, Henderson and Milstein (2003), recognising the limitations of a within child model, developed a six-step system which first focuses on developing the resiliency of the organisation, then the educator, and, through this, creating the correct conditions for developing resilience in the child. The six-step model identifies protective factors which can be addressed within the school community. The first three are concerned with mitigating risk: increase bonding, setting clear and consistent boundaries and teaching life skills. The last three are concerned with actively building resilience; providing care and support, setting and communicating high expectations and providing opportunities for meaningful participation (Henderson and Milstein, 2003). While direct links can be made between the models of resilience and the protective factors highlighted in each, the underpinning theme for all of them is the essentiality of positive relationships in the development of resilience. A child demonstrating *grit* may well be resilient; it is highly unlikely that a child without resilience would be described as having *grit*. The issues raised by Garrett (2016), that of concerns with resilience being concerned with the individual and values judgement based seems to link more to the idea of *grit* as resilience rather than the models of resilience presented here, and particularly contrasts with Henderson and Milstein (2003). Another concern raised by (Garrett, 2016) is the political aspect of resilience and the prevalence of the use of the phrase by politicians with little awareness of what it entails; he notes the influence of the positive psychology movement, created by Martin Seligman at the University of Pennsylvania in the Positive Psychology Centre. Duckworth (2018), also part of the Positive

Psychology Centre, suggests that, as yet, they are not able to categorically state what engenders *grit*, but believes that a growth mind-set approach (Dweck, 2017) seems to be the most effective way of developing it. The growth mind-set approach has much in common with resilience in that it looks at the best environment and conditions in supporting children to develop a positive mind-set; it is concerned with positive relationships, a positive outlook or optimism and an ability to learn from perceived failure or adversity. It differs in that it is more concerned with changing mind-sets through challenge and the use of language rather than the mitigation of risk as highlighted by Henderson and Milstein (2003). Resilience and growth mind-set appears concerned with the well-being of the child; *grit* appears to be concerned with achievement and attainment (Duckworth, 2018; Dweck, 2017; Grotberg, 1995).

### **Participation and Pupil Voice**

Participation is an integral part of resilience with the child having agency and seen to have agency by those working with them (Henderson and Milstein, 2003). Participation is a complex term which can often be used tokenistically (Kellett, 2013; Chamberlain *et al*, 2019). The term links to the UNCRC (UNGA, 1989), recognising that children have the right to express their views on issues of importance to them and to have these views both listened to and responded to (Cooper *et al*, 2019). Kellett (2013:27) describes this participation as ‘the act of doing and being involved’ noting the importance of children’s involvement in the decision making process throughout research. Cooper *et al* (2019) further regard participation as the gold standard of research reiterating the importance of addressing the power imbalance of the research process by involving children in each stage of the research; whereas Kellett (2103: 28) views child agency as the ‘fulfilment of participation’ enabling children to see change brought about as a result of their views and actions (Bandura, 2001). Framing research with the view that the children are the agents, responsible for reflection, action and change, acknowledges their potential power in the situations and structures which affect them (Blanchet-Cohen, 2008). One of the aspects of my research which proved challenging, was finding literature which explores pupils’ views on school values and values education in general; Cooper and Kellett (2017) note that children’s experiences are not taken into consideration in research and that when they are they are often changed. Pike (2010) presents research which he undertook in one secondary academy school, exploring the role of values in transforming schools with the stated aim of discriminating between the student experience of the core values and the intended experiences. The school employs a set of values to underpin their school ethos, behaviour management and teaching. Pike’s (2010) research focuses on the opinions of the academy founder (Bragg *et al.*, 2011). Only two student views were presented in which they stated that the school values are not

necessarily Christian values and that values were mainly discussed in Philosophy, Theology and Ethics. Pike (2010) appears heavily biased towards a Christian ethos; this could explain the limited discussion around the concept raised by the students (Jerome and Kisby, 2019). Bragg *et al.* (2011) commend the aims of the research as it explores the students' experience, but note the lack of evidence concerned with the pupil and staff experience. Bragg *et al.* (2011: 563) contest Pike's claim that a teacher comparing the school values with values in a Shakespeare text demonstrates developing values with the pupils and reframes the activity as pupils finding the values in the literature and "repeating what is in effect the school's party line". This contrasts with Pike's response which passionately defends the transformative nature of the experience offered at the school (Pike, 2011). Pike is a keen supporter of character education and works with the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues.

### **Fundamental British Values**

Arthur (2005), in line with Durkheim *et al.* (1961), presents one of the difficulties with developing a shared vision or moral code as being that Britain is a pluralistic, secular society. In a society where opinions have become polarised (Hobolt, 2016), the development of shared moral codes is problematic and, potentially, impossible. The introduction of Fundamental British Values (FBV) appears, semantically, to misrepresent a pluralistic society. Arthur (2005) presents the work of the National Forum for Values in Education and the Community, who in 1996 identified the core values of friendship, justice, truth, self-respect, and respect for the environment which share similarities with the FBV of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Elton-Chalcraft *et al* (2017) argue that there is little which makes the values fundamentally British and note the universality of FBV. Hildebrand (2017:21) aligns the values with Kant's philosophy of respect for others towards a just society, describing them as 'cosmopolitan values'. Some schools have chosen to link the FBV to United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNGA, 1989) despite the subjects not being linked by current government guidance (Struthers, 2016). Struthers (2016) suggests a possible reason for this reticence is due to a growing anti-human rights agenda and the proposal to move towards a British Bill of Rights (Harvey, 2018). The House of Lords Select Committee on Citizenship and Civic Engagement (2018) report supports this view, reporting on the alienating effects of FBV and suggest that the values should be promoted throughout society as a positive step, not as a counter-terrorism approach. The report proposes that the most effective way of doing this would be through

citizenship education and PSHE throughout all key stages instead of the individualistic approach of character education (Jerome and Kisby, 2019).

### **Character Education**

Arthur (2005) identifies a number of teaching methods of character education; didactic teaching and role modelling of desirable values and virtues, establishment of behavioural rules and enforcement, using moral stories in the classroom and using moral examples from history, literature and religion. Alongside this Arthur (2005) identifies the use of outside agencies such as service projects to reinforce these character traits and values as an effective and well used strategy. Unsurprisingly, the methods align with the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues (Jerome and Kisby, 2019). The centre is endorsed by the current government, and supports the character education initiative with resources and guides and states the aim of shaping 'future attitudes and behaviours of the British people' (Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, 2019 [online]). However, research into character education found that primary schools, while concerned with developing the characters and well-being of their pupils did this through the ethos and values of the school rather than in isolated lessons (DfE, 2017).

While researching character education, I noticed that there appeared to be a system of rabbit holes. The initial launch of the Character Education initiative (DfE, 2014b) cites good practice and research which seemed to be intrinsically linked; The Director of the Jubilee Centre for Character and Values has developed programmes and researches the effectiveness of these programmes delivered in schools funded to deliver the programmes. The Academy school chain delivering the programmes being researched was founded by Lord O Shaughnessy, senior fellow of the Jubilee Centre, Conservative peer and former director of policy to David Cameron (Jerome and Kisby, 2019). On further investigation, Nicky Morgan who launched character education and cited the Jubilee Centre as the inspiration behind the initiative (DfE, 2014b) is an Honorary Senior Research Fellow of the Jubilee Centre. Allen and Bull (2018) identify further links within the character education networks leading to the common factor of the John Templeton Foundation, a neoconservative philanthropic group concerned with the Big Questions in the classroom and strengthening the case for religious education in England (John Templeton Foundation, 2019). Allen and Bull (2018) note that the John Templeton Foundation is also a major donor to the Republican party and to anti-gay rights bodies, with a guiding principle that capitalism benefits the poor. Further research demonstrates links between seemingly separate organisations. Pike (referenced earlier) is also part of the Jubilee Centre and has developed *Narnian Virtues*, a character education curriculum based on the principles in the C.S. Lewis books. Acknowledged as a reworking of the stories of Christ (Hooper, 2009; Moore, 2018),

Pike describes the curriculum as promoting universal values which are relevant for a pluralistic society. The *Narnian Virtues* initiative is also funded by The Templeton Foundation. Suissa (2015) notes the concerns around character education being fundamentally right wing and challenges this using the example of *Demos*, a cross party think tank who support the idea of character education. *Demos*, while seemingly independently producing reports on the work of the Jubilee Centre for character and virtues (Birdwell *et al.*, 2015) reports in its annual returns of 2015 that it received over £40,000 from the Jubilee Centre, thus indirectly from The Templeton Foundation (Allen and Bull, 2018). This brings into question whether this is a further conflict of interest whereby the independent researchers are receiving money from the service they are researching (Jerome and Kisby, 2019).

## **Conclusion**

Literature describes a number of initiatives and approaches, all designed with the intention of making children moral citizens (Plato, 2013; Kant, 2001; Halstead and Taylor, 2000; Carr, 1997; Kohn, 1997). The dichotomy lies in whether children are viewed as inherently bad needing to be fixed by being taught explicit lessons about character and morality or as participating and thinking citizens who need opportunities to develop their own personal values guided by a moral code (Dewey, 1975). To link back to Rorty (1998) who identifies three strands for the purpose of education, the different approaches to virtue development in schools can be linked, with the moral absolutism of character education as a theory of knowledge, Citizenship as a political education and values education as part of moral education. However, the discussion has highlighted that in reality the lines between such approaches are not clear cut or even possible (Plato, 1956). Terms are used interchangeably with (Lickona, 1996) perceiving character education as a means of developing values and Kohlberg and Hersh (1977) describing it as a ready to use bag of virtues, much in line with the Christian Values 4 schools [online] which provides schools with a list of values which the schools choose from without creativity or deviation.

Kohn (1997) promotes an alternative approach promoting children's moral and social development, adopting a constructivist approach, encouraging reflection, curiosity and growth. This approach builds on the assumption that children have the potential to make positive choices with good role models demonstrating kindness and respect.

Much in the way Hobolt (2016) describes polarised views in the country, the literature demonstrates polarised views on virtues education. The democratic or Socratic approaches which promote lived development and discovery of values through experience and relationships encourage children to

intrinsically develop a moral code and personal values (Plato, 2013; Kant, 1996; Dewey, 1975). This approach also encourages children to think and question (Kant, 2001; Dewey, 1975; Pring, 1984) which could disrupt the formation of an autocratic society. The more didactic and authoritarian approaches convey the views of the adults as the correct views which children are required to acquiesce to through their conformity and obedience (Dewey, 1975). These approaches, however do not enable children to form their own moral compass which guides their actions and can leave children vulnerable and submissive or unable to make decisions without extrinsic motivators, and Kant (1996) would question the morality of actions which lack moral thought.

Another theme to emerge is the continuing power of religion in virtues education with RE remaining a compulsory subject along with a daily act of collective worship. The funding of government supported initiatives by a neoconservative Christian foundation with the aim of promoting religious discovery in Britain could be seen as a step towards a theistic approach to virtues education (Allen and Bull, 2018). The connections between governmental departments and seemingly independent organisations concerned with the development of the children of Britain seems at best to lack transparency. The funding for research into approaches to character education being provided by those with an interest in the success of the initiatives with the research being carried out by those intrinsically linked with the same initiative seems to be a clear conflict of interest which seems ironic when exploring ways of developing character and promoting positive virtues (Allen and Bull, 2018).

With the classroom as a microcosm of society (Fakirani, 2013) if children are required to operate as good citizens in a democratic society, it is essential that the classroom prepares the child for their role. It must do this through nurturing positive relationships which support the development of their moral compass, personal values and independence (Aristotle, 2014). It is essential that we teach children not what to think, but to think for themselves, to think empathically and to think consistently with themselves (Kant, 1996).

It is generally accepted that children's social functioning is formed by the time they start school, thus acknowledging the impact of attachment and environmental factors in a child's development, (Halstead and Taylor, 2000). Within this there is recognition that school and peers influence a child's value system and moral reasoning which informs their character (Carr, 1991). Temperament is similarly steeped in the child's experiences, attachments and relationships with others as the development of emotional literacy helps to shape temperament. This would suggest that children starting school will have their own opinions and thoughts about their school and their experiences in it rather than a tabula rasa incapable of independent thought and amenable to behavioural training (Skinner, 1974). Woolley (2010) asserts that children do arrive in school with their own values and

beliefs, but that their experiences with their teachers and fellow learners will continue to nurture and shape these democratic values. This suggests that a values clarification model of values education is going to be more successful than an authoritarian and didactic approach (Halstead and Taylor, 2000)

Throughout the literature presented, there has been little concern with the voices of the children. While researching pupil voice linked to thoughts about virtues education I was unable to find research representing the opinions of the main stakeholders. This could suggest that even those democratic approaches still favour the voice of the adult over the voice of the child. Therefore, this research project identifies the need for children's opinions and perceptions of their experiences in school to be further investigated in an ethical and meaningful way which will be addressed in the next chapter.



## **Chapter 3**

### **Epistemological and ethical considerations for researching values in school**

Methodology is the approach behind the method; the reasons behind selecting approaches and is imbued with the values of the researcher. Methodology is directed by the researcher's axiology, epistemology and ontological stance and, as well as guiding research decisions, enables the researcher to justify their choices to themselves and others leading to a clear, ethical stance and robust research project (Clough and Nutbrown, 2012).

In this chapter I present my world view, expounding on my beliefs about the purpose of research, and my ontological and epistemological stance. I evaluate a qualitative stance, looking at the importance of interviews and radical listening in my research. I present a discussion on Personal Construct Theory and Constructive Alternativism and the use with children. I present my ethical position as a researcher prior to evaluating the methods I used in my research with the children.

#### **World View**

Research is the focused act of exploring a particular topic and attempting to make sense of the findings from the research project through making links to other research, literature and philosophies (Savin-Baden and Howell Major, 2012). It is also an exploration of one's own assumptions through enquiry with participants, informed by the theory and literature surrounding the area of interest, leading to a critique of current practice and of the political context (Clough and Nutbrown, 2012).

My research explores different perspectives towards values education, such as why differing approaches have been used under different governing parties and through curriculum changes. It also evaluates the effectiveness of these approaches as presented by literature, philosophers and theorists and as perceived by the participants in the study.

Research should make a difference both at the time for the participants and for the reader in challenging their perceptions (Clough and Nutbrown, 2012; Hill, 2005). It makes a contribution to knowledge, reframing the ethical mantra from "Do No Harm" to creating a positive experience of doing some good, contributing to the participants' wellbeing (Hill, 2005). From a constructivist approach, all experiences will have an impact on our construing of the world, thus all participants in research will be, in some way, affected by their participation. It is important, therefore as a constructivist researcher to ensure this is a meaningful and positive experience for all involved. This

also fits with the notion of a respectful researcher which adopts an ethical rigour continuously throughout the research alongside trusting relationships with a familiar person enhancing informed consent and a reciprocal approach to the research (Tilley, 1998).

As a constructivist, my ontological stance is that there are multiple interpretations of reality rather than a defined absolute reality, this could be described as radical relativism (Mertens, 2015). My stance aligns with a relativist ontology as I believe Personal Construct Theory [PCT] enables multiple realities and constructions to co-exist, and that perceptions are not “true” or “not true”, but may be more or less informed or evidenced (Yin, 2016). The nature of reality is undefinable due to these individual and idiosyncratic perceptions of reality, and due to the belief that realities and perceptions will change over time depending on experiences and relationships (Denzin and Lincoln, 2012). A constructivist or interpretivist epistemological belief asserts the importance of the relationship between the researcher and the participants in order to co-construct meaning with issues of values and power imbalances being addressed explicitly (Mertens, 2015). A constructivist paradigm is concerned with finding meaning through interactions with participants. This is generally done through qualitative means (Mertens, 2015), however, to choose a paradigm over the most appropriate method for the participant could be seen as limiting and not necessarily appropriate to the project (Clough and Nutbrown, 2012). A constructivist axiology acknowledges the importance of working with participants and representing their views and considers the personal responsibility of the researcher to act as a moral person (Denzin and Lincoln, 2012). This approach has underpinned every aspect of my research project, from my conduct during the research to the representation of the participants’ views while questioning approaches of moral education and whether they maintain a moral purpose.

These assumptions, questions and circumstances are aligned with an Interpretivist approach (Denzin and Lincoln, 2012). Interpretivism or Constructivism aids the researcher and the participants to construct and interpret meaning while eliciting deep and rich insights into the participants’ experiences (Denzin and Lincoln, 2012; Denicolo *et al.*, 2016). A Constructivist approach allows the researcher to start from a position of curiosity and inquiry rather than with preconceptions to be proved or disproved. This was essential for the research I undertook as the question was generated from preconceptions about the children’s perceptions and beliefs about the school values (Denicolo *et al.*, 2016). The constructions of the participants form the foundations of knowledge or *verstehen* about the situation (Denzin and Lincoln, 2012).

Constructivism presents the world view that individuals construct their own reality of the world through their own individual relationships and experiences, and that, as such, no two views will be

exactly the same (Denicolo *et al.*, 2016). The researcher has to challenge and acknowledge their own assumptions or constructs in order to be interested in how others see the world, not in imposing their perceptions or finding one 'correct' answer to their questions. The constructivist approach holds that our assumptions about how the world operates are idiosyncratic and as a result of our responses to experiences and relationships, not as the result of a universal truth and, therefore, not generalisable (Denicolo *et al.*, 2016). This fits with my research as I am interested, not in gaining a general consensus, but in uncovering the participants' individual stories.

Interpretivism can be seen as a response to the dominant paradigm of the positivistic or scientific approach to research (Thomas, 2013). It challenges positivism through its emphasis on the need for a holistic approach, recognising the complexity of research with people and the lack of definitive truths or answers (Savin-Baden and Howell Major, 2012). Interpretivism notes the agency of the participants; that they are capable of expressing opinions and ideas about their situations and the subjective nature of these (Savin-Baden and Howell Major, 2012).

Kelly's theory of Constructive Alternativism (1991) developed as a response to positivism and behaviourism with Kelly proposing that positivistic theories could not explain the human experience as they regarded the participants as passive recipients of their surroundings and experiences (Butler, 2009). While Kant's ideas may have paved the way for a constructivist philosophy, Kelly is regarded as the pioneer of constructivism (Winter, 1992; Pope and Denicolo, 2001). Constructive Alternativism can therefore be considered the forerunner of the interpretivist approach and frames my research approach and will be elaborated on later in the chapter.

The co-creator aspect of my research suggests a transactional and subjectivist epistemology (Denzin and Lincoln, 2012) as my recognition as myself as part of the research and the participants as fellow architects of the research. Hill (2005) asserts that few studies include participants in the research design and aims but notes that this is a more ethical way to conduct research. Westcott and Littleton (2005) support this view point, suggesting that children should be offered choices and the opportunity to view and comment on conclusions, something which is integral to PCT. Recent advances in child-led research have meant that some researchers have focused on including participants in design through to dissemination (Chamberlain *et al.*, 2019). While PCT is both the methodology and the method I use, there are elements of hermeneutical and dialectical approaches as I am keen to talk to the participants about what I can do, identifying issues from their perspectives and working on solutions, using this to inform design of the research in a collaborative way (Denzin and Lincoln, 2012).

## Qualitative Research

Personal Construct Theory and Constructive Alternativism bring together the disparate aspects of a number of philosophies and theories which fit and underpin my stance as a professional working with children and as a researcher, while allowing for the emergent nature of the research.

While some aspects of PCT could be seen as adopting a quantitative approach (Jankowicz, 2004), in particular with the Repertory Grid Technique (RGT), this is not the approach which supports my research approach and PCT allows for this flexibility and choice. While there is the capacity for using numbers in the Repertory Grid, my analysis consists of discussion with the participants about their pictures, stories and interviews, an approach recommended by Ravenette (1999) when working with children to enable them to communicate with the people working with them, whether as researcher or in a therapeutic relationship. Denscombe (2017) suggests that qualitative data is more concerned with description than analysis, allowing the stories to stand alone without comparison or the need to look for correlations. While PCT allows for generalised analysis (Kelly, 1991), my research is more concerned with exploring individual perceptions and constructs. Denscombe (2017) notes the capacity for quantitative studies to conduct larger scale studies with a more efficient use of time. I took a qualitative stance as I wanted to give the participants the opportunity to answer the questions they wanted to raise, suggesting a holistic approach rather than presenting a specific question (Emond, 2005). The scale of my study could be considered fairly large and has generated a large amount of data; using a quantitative approach may have enabled as many children to participate in a more time-efficient way. Working in the class one day a week for the academic year meant that there was full researcher involvement rather than detachment, promoting the importance of developing relationships with the children over an extended time period to develop trust (Emond, 2005; Greene and Hill, 2005). While I had research questions and a plan, which could suggest a quantitative approach, the design was very much emergent, with one method designed with the children and class teacher in response to the first method I had used with the year group. Grounded theory could have been a useful approach due to the emergent nature; however, the focus on interaction, action and processes did not fit with my research aim of eliciting children's voices and their perceptions (Savin-Baden and Howell-Major, 2013). Similarly, I explored an ethnographic approach which was also plausible to fit with my research due approach, due to the immersive nature and the study of people and values (Emond, 2005) and how the data could be presented from the participant's perspective (Cohen *et al.*, 2018). However, I chose not to adopt this approach as my research is concerned with individual representations rather than the study of a group. My positionality as co-constructor of the research with the participants also precluded an

ethnographic approach in which the researcher is an external observer and reporter (Savin-Baden and Howell-Major, 2013). PCT comes with its own analytical framework which was sufficient for keeping the analysis valid to the research aims.

Qualitative research can be challenging to define due to the breadth of approaches which it encompasses (Yin, 2016). Yin (2016) defines it as having five distinguishing features; exploring and gaining some understanding of people's lives, presenting the participant's stories, recognising the context in which the participants are in, a desire to develop and present new ideas and concepts from the research, and the recognition of the need for a variety of evidential sources in order to enrich the data. Greene and Hill (2005) support this approach, in particular with children whereby they are enabled to tell their stories through a variety of methods, some which may be more suited to them. Denzin and Lincoln (2012) concur on both the complexity of the approach and the features Yin (2016) highlights and presents the place of the researcher as an integral part of the process, an interpreter located within the research. Savin-Baden and Howell Major (2012) present a number of definitions for qualitative research, from defining qualitative research as undefinable, to their own which consists of exploring participants' perceptions or stories about their lives and noting what they attribute meaning to, which are distinct features of PCT (Kelly, 1991). These definitions, while appearing disparate, encapsulate the features and flexibility which I require in my research. I am an active participant exploring and gaining some understanding of the participants' lives through presenting their stories in a variety of ways concerned with meaning and individual interpretation of things and events (Denscombe, 2017). Kelly (1991) further develops this idea by recognising the individual nature of the way we construe events due to our own experiences which informs our perceptions. This demonstrates the researcher's interest and investment in an individual's stories or constructions; working with the co-constructors to help them divine their own meaning, rather than imposing the researcher's interpretation (with the researcher's personal constructions) upon it. BERA guidelines highlight Responsibilities to Participants (BERA, 2018) and can be viewed as a respectful approach to the participants. I have chosen to use PCT due to the theoretical position which underpins the method, particularly the belief in the participant centred approach whereby the client/interviewee may act as their own scientist (Kelly, 1991), and is seen as an expert in their own perceptions.

### **Personal Construct Theory and Constructive Alternativism**

Personal Construct Theory (PCT) was conceptualised by George Kelly in 1955. His belief was that it was not a theory, rather a description of what people did. Constructive Alternativism is the philosophical underpinning of PCT distinguished by its creative exploration of possible realities (Kelly,

1991). The basic tenets of PCT are underpinned by Constructive Alternativism which, simply put, Kelly uses to describe the way that we are constantly revising and reviewing our beliefs (constructs) about the world as a result of our experiences (Kelly, 1991; Enriquez, 2009). Constructive Alternativism is also concerned with the idea that different people have different ways of construing the same thing and that we can construe the same thing differently on different occasions. Kelly states that, 'Man creates his own ways of seeing the world in which he lives; the world does not create them for him' (Kelly, 1991:9). Enriquez (2009) identifies the unique quality of Constructive Alternativism as being the very thing which caused controversy in that it sees man as having agency (intentions and capability) and as such does not just react to the world but anticipates events as a result of relational meaning.

Kelly's Fundamental Postulate states that 'a person's processes are psychologically channelized by the ways in which he anticipates event' (Kelly, 1991:46) and implies that we look to the future and attempt to construe the events before us based on our constructs which are a result of our experiences (Enriquez, 2009). This construing helps us to anticipate future events and predict what may happen suggesting that people do not act only as a reaction to a stimulus (Bannister and Mair, 1968), that they have agency and experiences which may determine actions. It could be argued that the agency people hold and their experiences could be the stimulus, they are not, however an individual stimulus and happen in context. The Fundamental Postulate is supported by a further eleven corollaries which elaborate upon the Fundamental Postulate and detail the core theory of PCT. The Construction Corollary notes the person's attention to patterns in everyday life which they utilise to predict events and outcomes while the Individuality Corollary highlights the idiosyncratic way in which people interpret and predict events as a result of their individual constructions. The Organisation Corollary describes the way in which the individual develops systems to hold and organise constructs, noting the relationships between them as well as reconciling disparities. The Dichotomy Corollary is concerned with the way our constructs are formed and defined as much by their opposites as their similar views. Kelly's Choice Corollary highlights the place of agency in our constructs suggesting that we choose constructs for their usefulness in supporting our stories and that these are not extrinsically imposed. The Range Corollary notes the limitations on our constructs in that we can only anticipate a finite range of events which links to the Experience Corollary which suggests that the construction system changes as a result of experiences, but that these are not infinite. The Modulation Corollary builds on this with a belief that, despite experiences changing construction systems that these are still situated within a regulated system in relation to other constructs. The Fragmentation Corollary appears at first to contradict the Modulation Corollary as it states that people's constructions are not predictable and that they can hold inconsistent and

seemingly incompatible constructs. However, this corollary links back to the idiosyncratic nature of people constructions and their individual views of consistency and inconsistency rather than an externally held view of consistency and inconsistency. The Commonality and Sociality Corollaries, while at first appearing similar are very distinct with the Commonality Corollary noting that while people may hold similar constructs, this will not be as a result of the same experiences, while the Sociality Corollary is concerned with the way people may try to predict the constructs and behaviours of others as a result of their own constructs and behaviours and how these social interactions will have an impact on the constructions of both parties.

Kelly's theory was developed in a time where Behaviourist approaches dominated, and contrasted with commonly held beliefs about human psychology and behaviour (Butler, 2009). PCT contravenes the Behaviourist approach which maintains that people respond as a result of extrinsic motivation and are born as a blank slate ready to be written upon, aligning with a Positivistic approach rather than a Constructivist approach (Skinner, 1974; Bannister and Fransella, 1986). Bannister (1985) presents the criticisms of Kelly's work by psychologists such as Bruner and Rogers which views PCT as a cognitive theory with no notion of emotions. Kelly's response was that to divide thinking and feeling reverted to a behaviourist approach as PCT was concerned with the person in a holistic way (Pope and Denicolo, 2001). Chiari (2013) further develops this discussion, presenting the idea that PCT does not try to define or fix emotion, rather that it enables the participant to note the transitions and to present it from their own perspective, suggesting that PCT, rather than being divorced from emotion, is inextricably underpinned by emotions.

Warren (2009) suggests that PCT may present a further problem for psychologists in Kelly's credulous approach, a viewpoint raised as an issue for researchers by Greene and Hill (2005) who note issues of validity as people can lie or can be deceptive. In PCT Kelly encourages a credulous approach, even when the participant's depiction of events appears to contradict what may be seen as a factual event; instead of searching for the "truth", the researcher should be engaging with and reflecting on the participant's truth. This aligns with the importance of verisimilitude rather than verifiability, focusing on finding 'truth-likeness' through examining a number of truths and finding coherent stories (Savin-Baden and Howell Major, 2012:475). This may pose a problem for the researcher if they desire more concrete evidence to support a theory; the more widespread use of the Repertory Grid Technique (RGT) as market research may suggest unreliable data which is not generalisable (Jankowicz, 2004). The credulous approach provides challenges for a researcher with a positivist stance, however Bannister (1985) would contest this by affirming its ability to enable the researcher to respond more creatively to the issues raised by the participants. PCT allows for

numerous constructions about a situation to be held by people experiencing the same phenomena and also acknowledges the impermanence of those constructs over time held by the individuals.

### **Self-Characterisation**

One of the methods I chose to use was Self-Characterisation, which Kelly (1991) describes as a simple approach relying on certain procedures encapsulated in Kelly's words:

I want you to write a character sketch of Harry Brown, just as if he were the principal character in a play. Write it as it might be written by a friend who knew him very intimately and very sympathetically, perhaps better than anyone could ever really know him. Be sure to write it in the third person. For example, start out by saying, "Harry Brown is..." (Kelly, 1991:323).

Kelly's reasoning behind this approach was that the request for a character sketch may enable the person to present themselves in a more holistic way, the use of the third person emphasising this while also encouraging some objectivity. The insistence that the person describing the character is a friend may help to encourage a more sympathetic description rather than presenting oneself using a deficit model (Kelly, 1991). The description of the intimacy of the relationship suggests to the participant the depth required, avoiding a superficial description and suggesting an unconditional acceptance of the person for who they are rather than who they think they should be (Pope and Denicolo, 2001).

Self-Characterisation is a method which enables the researcher to attempt to see situations from the perspective of the participant, it does not recount facts but can present the participant's view of others and their multiple situations (Burr and Butt, 1992). It is an exercise which embodies the credulous approach as it encourages the participant to present their story and constructs, not those imposed by the researcher, enabling the researcher to experience the participant's truth of a situation (Ravenette, 1977; Winter, 1992). While Ravenette (1977) and Winter (1992) are commenting on the efficacy of the approach from a psychologist's perspective, Pope and Denicolo (2001) recognise the applicability of Self-Characterisation to the research process rather than being limited to the clinical application as it asks for the participant's unique perspective. The conversational technique allows for another layer of participant ownership by writing two Self-Characterisations; the first a private Self-Characterisation prior to the one which the participant can share with the researcher or interviewer (Adams-Webber, 1979) This may help the participant to order and consider that which they are happy to share and that which they are not, while enabling them to reflect on the disparities which arise, thus enabling the participant to view the discrepancies between the public and the private story of themselves (Bannister and Fransella, 1986). This approach invites the reader to look at the Self-Characterisation not in terms of linguistic patterns



and themes, but by employing a credulous approach to the sketch the participant has chosen to share, acknowledging the lack of structure and untidy nature of Self Characterisation, unlike other PCT methods (Fransella and Bannister, 1977; Bannister and Fransella, 1986).

The untidy nature of the Self-Characterisation approach fits with the untidy nature of human lives and the multiple roles which people may play at work, with their families and with friends (Pope and Denicolo, 2001), suggesting the need for multiple Self-Characterisations as written by representatives from the different communities. However, for the purposes of this research the focus was the self's experience at school rather than focusing on the individual for therapeutic purposes. While the Self-Characterisation approach is generally used to elicit constructs (Fransella and Bannister, 1977) I also chose to use them to elicit elements for the repertory grid technique (RGT) in order to represent more voices in the RGTs which could not be done with the whole year group due to time constraints (Jankowicz, 2004).

The main criticism levelled at the Self-Characterisation technique is the suggestion that participants may lie or misrepresent themselves (Pope and Denicolo, 2001), however it is the credulous approach which enables participants to present themselves in the way they choose (Kelly, 1991). When asking the children to present their experiences in school, it is their idiosyncratic views and constructions which are interesting. The Self-Characterisation has been used as a tool for school improvement with staff (Pope and Keen, 1981), thus it can reasonably lend itself to a potential tool for school improvement when employed with children.

### **Repertory Grid Technique (RGT)**

Kelly (1991) originally designed the Repertory Test as a tool to be used in a clinical setting and was concerned with role constructs, asking the participant to allot people they knew to the roles set by Kelly, for example 'A teacher you liked,' (Kelly, 1991:221). This process generates the elements to be sorted by selecting three people (elements) and asking how two of them are the same, but different from the third. The subsequent dialogue results in the participant identifying a construct based on the similarities between the two and a contrast for the one identified as different. The Repertory Grid was developed by Kelly as a way of representing this process and as an extension of the design. The 'two alike' become the emergent pole of the construct and the 'odd one out' the implicit pole of the construct (Jankowicz, 2004). The bipolar nature of constructs is important to Kelly as he explains when discussing the Dichotomy Corollary, as the contrasting construct gives meaning to the construct (Kelly, 1991; Enriquez, 2009). Kelly uses the term construct rather than concept as he suggests that a construct will have an opposite whereas a concept will not (Botella, 1995). Enriquez

(2009) describes the individual's commitment to one construct as informed choices based on their background influences such as roles, traditions and shared beliefs and meanings reinforcing the importance of social influence on the individual.

While it was Kelly's intention to create an instrument to be used in the clinical setting, both the technique and PCT are applicable for much wider usage (Bannister and Mair, 1968; Pope and Denicolo, 2001). Bannister and Mair (1968) suggest that Kelly viewed the Repertory test as taking 'pride of place in his armamentarium of clinical tools' viewing the grid as 'a piece of methodological flamboyance', noting that the grid has received the most research attention, possibly due to its highly wrought design (Bannister and Mair, 1968:48). Kelly's background as a mathematician may have influenced the numerical representation, indeed the chapter is entitled 'The Mathematical Structure of Psychological Space' (Kelly, 1991:267).

The RGT may operate independently from PCT, with the grid used as a simple tool to gather information, a function borne out by the number of research journal articles which document the use of the technique with no reference to the underpinning theory or philosophy (Jankowicz, 2004; Kozikoglu, 2017; Yi Wang *et al.*, 2018; Kertzman *et al.*, 2019). However, Pope and Keen (1981) defend the use of the RGT as a methodology and not as a simple test which is valuable solely due to its highly flexible technique and application. The flexibility of the tool and the ability to use it with little knowledge of the underpinning theory may be the reason it is more widely used and researched than other PCT strategies (Jankowicz, 2004).

The idiographic nature of the RGT may be what differentiates it from other techniques designed to gain an understanding of how people view themselves with the apparently finite constructs which may be elicited, demonstrating constancy in thinking (Adams-Webber, 1979). In contrast to this participants may generate alternative constructs when presented with the same elements at a different time, but it could be stated that this supports the idiographic attributes of the approach (Adams-Webber, 1979). Furthermore, the RGT demonstrates a unique ability to combine a non-judgemental research approach with a structure which encourages participants to share their constructs openly (McCoy, 1983). However, some consider the RGT as not providing hypotheses or answers, but instead view it as one of the initial stages in data gathering and the catalyst for relevant questioning (Bell, 2009).

In conclusion, I have chosen a PCT approach as it enables the participants to tell their stories of their school community using their own preferred medium. It allows the researcher to remain curious (Kelly, 1991) but also to recognise themselves as part of the research.

## Research with Children

Children are often considered objects of research rather than subjects or participants (Greene and Hill, 2005), with researchers exploring children as becomings (or their potential) rather than as cognitive and sentient beings (Hogan, 2005). As a respectful researcher, it is essential to recognise children as co-constructors within the research rather than as passive responders (Westcott and Littleton, 2005). The researcher must recognise the participants as instructors or guides to their perceptions of their world (Emond, 2005) and regard them as the experts in their own world for ethical, respectful and meaningful research (Hill, 2005). These views align with Kelly's (1991) view of the participant, describing man as scientist, thus elevating the participant from object of research to expert and co-constructor. As a researcher I assume that children are capable and competent co-constructors and are able to fully participate in the research. I know that the views and constructs elicited are a snapshot of those children's thoughts at that time.

Research with children has focused more on their cognitive growth, rather than on their subjective experiences which is more aligned to a positivist paradigm (Hogan, 2005), acknowledging that Piaget's work set parameters for development without acknowledging child agency. Children have been considered as unreliable participants who are unable to understand questions and contribute to research (Perry *et al.*, 2011), taking the Rousseauian view that children do not reach the age of reason until 12 (Hogan, 2005). Others take a more Lockean approach (Locke, 1880) regarding children as, not just capable of reason as soon as they are able to communicate, but thriving with an approach which recognises their capabilities; acknowledging the importance of consciousness and awareness of situations in order to be able to report and reflect on them (Greene and Hill, 2005). It is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that research methods and questions are developmentally appropriate without being patronising (Greene and Hill, 2005). The researcher must also explore a variety of ways 'to listen to, consult with and engage children' (Cooper and Kellett, 2017:229). For participation to be meaningful the adults need to ensure research plays by the child's rules for full engagement of the child (Jadue Roa *et al.*, 2018). The flexibility in Kelly's (1991) stance of the co-constructor encourages a respectful relationship in which questions are relevant and understood by the participant as they were involved in creating the question. The types of questions involved are important when working with children; children must feel able to clarify questions to ensure understanding, thus closed questions should be avoided due to the tendency of children to want to provide the 'correct answer' (Westcott and Littleton, 2005; Greene and Hill, 2005).

The respectful approach is essential when conducting research with any participants, but particularly so when there is a more pronounced power imbalance, that of adult and child. Working with children demonstrates the moral stance of the researcher; rather than objects of research, the participants are viewed as having their own personal values and rights (Greene and Hill, 2005) acknowledging that each child's experiences and worlds are idiosyncratic leading to an individual interpretation and construct of situations. The UNCRC (UNGA, 1989) states that children are entitled to form and hold their own views and that these views must be respected and listened to, particularly when the views concern matters affecting the child (Hogan, 2005; Cooper and Kellett, 2017). Jadue Roa *et al.* (2018) emphasise the importance of participation in relation to the UNCRC and recognise children as active participants in the research process, a point also developed by Hill (2005) who supports the idea of children having ownership of reporting and displaying their experiences in a way pertinent to them. Cooper (2017) describes the importance of using a method with limited adult intervention to support ownership of the research. The Self-Characterisations limited adult input; I introduced the task and the children could ask the adults to scribe for them. The Values Group work involved more of my intervention, but I was mindful to introduce the structure of the task, then to ask them to lead the discussions. The RGTs required more adult intervention, but the children had control of the elements and drew their own conclusions from their grids.

While issues around power asymmetry always present as an issue for consideration between researcher and participant (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009), this is of particular concern when working with children as the differences in power and ability between adults and children mean that extra measures must be taken to redress the balance and to acknowledge the asymmetry (Hill, 2005). As a researcher and teacher it is essential to acknowledge these roles and explicitly address how I plan to mitigate the power imbalance and act respectfully, taking account of the child's rights and interests (Alderson and Morrow, 2004). The children were made aware throughout the research process of their right to contribute both to the design of the research and to question it. Addressing the power imbalance by responding to their suggestions helped them to see that their contributions were taken seriously and that the power and responsibility of decision making was shared (Kellett, 2013). Making all (including non-participating adults) aware of the role of the researcher is important as this can help to distinguish the researcher from the adults in a position of power such as teachers (Emond, 2005), and possibly an issue which I struggled with in my research due to the expectations of the staff in the school.

Participants often wish to present themselves in the most socially acceptable way and to please the researcher which may lead to them not responding truthfully (Greene and Hill, 2005). Kelly (1991)

questions the need and achievability of seeking a definitive truth and encourages a credulous approach, which can help to address the power imbalance with a view that the participant is expert in their own lives. This approach aligns with Weber's idea of *verstehen*, acknowledging the importance of a person's understanding (or constructs) rather than incontrovertible knowledge or truth of a situation (Gann, 2017). Considering *verstehen* can help the researcher to acknowledge that research will always, to some extent, be distorted by the lens of the researcher and to plan ways of gathering and representing the authentic voice of the participant in recognition of this (Emond, 2005; Hogan, 2005).

### **Radical listening**

Listening to the voices of the participants has the highest prominence and representation in my research, therefore it is important to clarify that voice does not just represent the spoken word, it represents the multiple representations of the participants (Clough and Nutbrown, 2012). It was not audio recorded at the participants' request, so the voices were as the participants wished to represent their views and experiences, with regular checks between myself and the participants that I understood their representations or 'voices'. Voice can be communicated through behaviour and by what is not said, the job of the researcher is clarifying this and deciding whether it is ethical in the research to share that which has not been given freely. In research where covert observation is used, this approach of 'listening' to behaviour and making meaning may be appropriate, however my research is concerned with the intentional voice of the child and their choice to share or not. PCT is a way of generating voice which enables both the researcher and participant to look beyond their thinking (Clough and Nutbrown, 2012), enabling the researcher to gain an understanding of the participant's constructs about their school and their school values. Using the values to frame some of the research enables me to explore their perceptions of the school values and the way in which some children view them as a method of control. PCT as a guiding methodology enables the researcher to garner the constructs of the participants rather than what the researcher or interested parties (the school in this case) want to know.

Bucknall (2013) raises the issue of silent voices and voices which are silenced by the inaccessibility of the research methods. Spending the time to get to know the children ensured that I could plan the research in such a way that all children could access the methods in their own way, ensuring that all children were not silenced by the research design. While respecting the right to silence, it is important to acknowledge that the research is only representative of those who consent (Bucknall, 2013). Therefore, it is important for the researcher to find ways in which all children want to participate; participating in the research design seemed to encourage all children to participate.

In my research, 'voice' is the opportunity to speak freely and to have control over whether and how that is shared. Article 12 from the UNCRC states that children have the right to share their views and opinions on all matters concerning them and that these views must be considered seriously and appropriately in accordance with the age and maturity of the child (UNGA, 1989). Pupil voice is often gathered through school councils where two representatives from each class ask their classmates for anything they would like feedback to the weekly meeting of the school council where the intention is that they will act as advocates for their class. However, children often feel that the school councils represent the opinions of popular children and that their concerns and either not taken to the meetings, or not taken seriously (Cox and Robinson-Pant, 2005). Therefore, it was important to me to elicit and include all views and take them seriously, not just relying on a small sample.

## **Interview**

Interviewing, as a research technique can be a form of Radical Listening (Clough and Nutbrown, 2012) and is a key part of my research. Interviewing can be described as a purposeful conversation in which the interviewer asks questions to which the participant responds to gain information or opinions from the participant (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009; Savin-Baden and Howell Major, 2012). Interviewing forms part of my research; it could be said that Self-Characterisation is a form of interview in that the initial question enabled the participant to describe their day at school. Kelly used Self-Characterisations as a basis and preparation for a more formal therapeutic conversation, almost viewing the Self-Characterisation as the initial question in a protracted interview. However, the more formal interview process was in the Repertory Grid Technique (RGT). I felt it important that all children were included in the Self-Characterisation activity and given the opportunity to share their experiences, including those without parental permission to take part in the research.

While interviews are a key component of my research, it is important to be mindful of the challenges presented. In order to address issues of trust (Emond, 2005), I spent half a day a week over an academic year working with the participants, not starting any formal research until nine months into my work with them. While this undoubtedly led to more trusting relationships as evidenced in the data, this preparatory stage could be considered time consuming, without taking into account the time taken by the interviews and the subsequent analysis (Savin-Baden and Howell Major, 2012). Other challenges can be the desire to please the interviewer and for the participants to want to present themselves in a positive way (Greene and Hill, 2005; Yi Wang *et al.*, 2018; Savin-Baden and Howell Major, 2012), however the data I gathered disputes this, possibly due to the ethical

considerations in the research design and due to the trusting nature of the relationships developed over the year underpinned by a Constructivist axiology.

### **Ethical position**

As a respectful educator and researcher it is essential to have ethical consideration underpinning the work throughout the process rather than viewing it as a separate part of the research. This meant constantly being aware of ethical issues as they arose and dealing with them in a respectful way as well as planning for conceivable ethical issues. The medical ethics mantra to “Do no Harm”, while laudable does not necessarily encourage the researcher to assess the risks the research may cause in a measured and planned way. Savin-Baden and Howell Major (2012) present four themes under which ethics review boards may assess a research project; to assess the risks and benefits of the research to the participants, to ensure informed consent, to select the participants fairly and to ensure privacy and confidentiality of the participants. Denzin and Lincoln (2012) echo these themes, extrapolating with the idea of not deceiving participants, and the duty to collect and present valid, reliable data. As a researcher it is essential to be mindful of the additional care needed to be afforded to ethics when working with children and young people, and to be mindful of the power imbalance in their relationship (Alderson and Morrow, 2004). Adopting a PCT approach encourages the children to have full awareness of the research and their control over it, enabling them to see themselves as co-constructors of the work.

This research project gained ethical approval from the University of Winchester prior to the project starting and adheres to the University of Winchester Guidelines (see Appendix 1) (Scallan, 2019). Planning the research design with the head-teacher and class teachers ensured a level of risk assessment and prevention of psychological and physical harm as they were able to use their knowledge of the children, their parents and the school setting to minimise any risk in the role of gatekeepers in accordance with BERA (2018). The design of the research must demonstrate explicit consideration to ethical concerns at each stage, from the conception, through data collection, presentation of data and subsequent analysis (Savin-Baden and Howell Major, 2012). The data were securely stored in a locked filing cabinet and on a password protected computer. The data was destroyed on completion of the report in accordance with the project information sheet (see Appendix 1).

Considering a non-deceptive approach, the Autumn term school newsletter informed all the parents and carers that I would be working in year 4, culminating in a research project in the summer term, thus acknowledging the importance of informing parents and carers as gatekeepers (BERA, 2018).

On my first day in each class I introduced myself to the pupils, discussed what I would be doing over the year with them and described how we would be working together, ensuring that, by beginning the consultation at this early stage, it would ensure the participants had a full understanding of the research project by the time we undertook the data collection in the summer term (BERA, 2018). In the Spring term a consent letter was sent to the parents to read with their children, informing them about the project and about their right to withdraw or not participate in the research and offering a meeting after school to discuss the project with the parents and pupils along with my contact details (BERA, 2018).

The idea of informed consent can be contentious; my initial concern was to ensure that the parents fully understood what they were consenting to taking account of barriers such as language and literacy levels of the parents in accordance with ethical guidelines. The letter was discussed with the pupils prior to its distribution to ensure they were able to discuss it with their carers out of the school environment and may have enabled any pupils to influence the parental consent in their home environment. It may be suggested that this was a manipulation and use of the power imbalance in our relationship with children keen to please me (Greene and Hill, 2005) or that it may have utilised hidden pressure to prey on children's need to belong and to feel included (Dogan, 2012). I had been working alongside the participants' teacher for the academic year and the children viewed me as a member of staff, despite care taken to present as a researcher rather than a teacher (Emond, 2005). Giving out the letters in class may have been utilising the pester power of the children and there may have been an element of peer pressure when parents had not returned the consent forms. Informed consent must be freely given (Alderson and Morrow, 2004), as a researcher, I worried that the pressure from the children meant that the consent was less than voluntarily provided as a number of children whose parents had not returned the consent form did put pressure on their parents to return the letters. In theory the researcher should disassociate themselves from the class teacher to work towards redressing the power imbalance (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009), however, it appeared on balance to be more possible to develop trusting relationships by working with the participants in their classroom setting which was an integral part of the research.

A further ethical concern for me was that children who wanted to participate in the research were unable to, mainly due to a few parents not returning the consent form. Hill (2005) highlights this dilemma and acknowledges that many countries respect the child's wishes over that of the parent. Cooper and Kellett (2017) describe this as a censorship of children's views and perspectives. Despite acknowledgement of agency and competency, it is interesting that adults get the final say in a child's participation both through action and inaction (Emond, 2005). I received one form out of fifty-three



where the parent did not want the child to participate in the research, while eleven were not returned. All children were able to participate in the Self-Characterisation session, as those without consent were keen to participate, but their work was not used in the research if a parental permission form had not been returned or permission denied in order to respect the parent's right to withhold consent, but also to ensure that no pupils would feel excluded by the process. The power of the gatekeeper appears to be in contravention of the UNCRC Article 12 whereby children have the right to views and opinions and for these to be listened to and taken seriously (1989), with this right rarely being applied in research, possibly due to the lack of distinction between informed consent for medical research and treatment and social science research (Dogan, 2012). NHS guidelines suggest that the Gillick competency ruling, legally binding for informed consent in medical treatment, has been adopted in the absence of any legal rule in research with children (Alderson and Morrow, 2004; National Health Service Health Research Authority, 2018). BERA guidelines (BERA, 2018) acknowledge UNCRC, but they focus on Article 5 which is concerned with taking into consideration the consideration of the opinions of those with legal guardianship of the children and suggest that this 'may' take the form of parental consent. Parental consent is important as it can be another level of safeguarding, acknowledging that not all research and researchers have the best interests of the child at heart (Alderson and Morrow, 2004), however, in the case of consent forms not being returned, it is important to question the ethics which prevents a child's participation who wishes to participate through an adult's inaction (Hill, 2005).

In accordance with BERA's guidelines on voluntary informed consent (BERA, 2018), all children were made aware at each step that they could withdraw at any time and that their participation in the research was voluntary (Hill, 2005). As a researcher I feel it is essential to check for consent throughout the research process and not to assume initial consent as pertaining to subsequent interviews or research activities (Hill, 2005). From a constructivist approach it is essential practice as it acknowledges that our constructions are constantly modified, thus consent cannot be assumed throughout the research project (Alderson and Morrow, 2004; Denicolo *et al.*, 2016). Furthermore, I ensured throughout the process that the participants were comfortable with the methods used and the recording of data, resulting in the group interviews not being audio recorded as initially intended, and the physical data being used instead in accordance with the wishes of the participants (Westcott and Littleton, 2005).

The research project was explained in detail to both classes and pupils were encouraged to ask questions to ensure they understood what they were agreeing to (BERA, 2018; Hill, 2005). Transparent discussion is essential for the ethical researcher to create the climate for the research project (Alderson and Morrow, 2004) and the responses given to the questions modelled an

approach which welcomed suggestions and new ideas about the research design (Westcott and Littleton, 2005), adopting a non-deceptive approach. Interestingly, most questions were around whether they would get into trouble if they said anything which could be perceived as negative about the school and whether the Senior Leadership Team would be able to identify them. While I reassured the children that their names would be changed, using some of the children's words verbatim or unadulterated drawings did highlight issues around identifiability. Walford (2001) discusses the difficulty of maintaining the confidentiality of participants, particularly when views may not appear supportive of the school ethos, and, as in this case where there are a finite number of participants who may hold those views. He presents the idea that some researchers may choose to publish their work at a later date to avoid identification, with the time lapse between data collection and thesis publication enabling participants to be less identifiable. Alderson and Morrow (2004) observe that children may struggle to believe that adults will respect their views if they contradict the dominant discourse, or in this case, the school values. A key question for me which was asked was whether I really wanted to know what they thought as adults didn't always mean that they wanted them to be honest even when they said they did. This was a particularly interesting observation as honesty is one of the school values.

In each research session I explained to the children that, while our discussions were confidential, if during the course of their work they wrote or told me anything which meant that I was concerned for their safety that I would have to pass that on to their head teacher (BERA, 2018). This is in line with the school safeguarding policy and respects the children's right to privacy, enabling them to choose what they share, with the teacher responsibility to keep them safe from harm (Alderson and Morrow, 2004).

## **Conclusion**

I embarked on the research with a desire to highlight the good practice of a values led school. Adopting a Constructivist approach with the participants or co-creators helped me to question who the values belonged to and whether externally imposed values are a more palatable, but ultimately similar, alternative to traditional, externally imposed school rules if they are set without consultation of the children expected to adopt them. These conversations led me to question the place of social control through moral education (Hogan, 2005) as opposed to values clarification and intrinsic motivation.

Children have traditionally been the objects of research (Greene and Hill, 2005) with more interest in them developmentally than in gaining an understanding of their experiences by asking them (Kelly, 1991).

The way in which the children, who were aged eight and nine, grasped the concept and practices of PCT has been revelatory. Some research suggests that PCT methods are too complex for children to access (Fransella and Bannister, 1977). This was not supported by my research, possibly due to high expectations and tailoring the methods to the participants. The responsibility is on the researcher to ensure that methods are appropriate and flexible in order to elicit meaningful responses from the participants (Westcott and Littleton, 2005). Some of the children I worked with were worried about issues around identifiability, but none showed any fear of the methods which was not always replicated with the adults I worked with, possibly due to fear of exposing uncomfortable feelings.

The research questions I developed set boundaries on a broad area of interest and enabled me to focus in on an area which permeated their everyday school experience. The focus of the questions is on the participants' perceptions of their school experiences and explores individual meaning rather than verifiable truth. The research questions were modified as I had initially intended to include staff perception; however, as discussed previously, I chose not to include these due to the contentious nature of the responses, as described by Clough and Nutbrown (2012) as 'too hot', leaving the participants in a vulnerable position.

I considered using observation to collect data on enactments of the values, but felt that this did not fit with my methodology as it is concerned with the researcher's interpretation of events rather than the participants' constructs of their experiences (Mertens, 2015).

In consideration of the above, the next section will describe what I did with the method foregrounded, underpinned and guided by my methodology.

## Chapter 4

### A critical evaluation of PCT methods for use with children

This section presents and critically evaluates the methods used and evaluates their effectiveness when applied to this research.

My research seeks to ask the participants (the children) to share their perceptions of their school experiences and their constructs of the school values, Love, Honesty, Hope and Forgiveness.

Circumstances which prompted this research were an interest in a school which chose to use the school values to frame their behaviour policy. The question developed as a result of a child asking the Head-Teacher why the values, which I had perceived as positive, were only used to reprimand or highlight negative behaviour, not in celebration of positive behaviour. Kellett (2013) describes respectful research as that which encourages children to set their own research agenda; using the child's question was the catalyst for the research. A Constructivist approach is essential for the research I undertook as the question was generated from preconceptions about the children's perceptions and beliefs about the school values (Denicolo *et al.*, 2016). The constructions of the participants form the foundations of knowledge or *verhesten* about the situation (Denzin and Lincoln, 2012). In many schools the Behaviourist approach persists and is promoted in current government advice (DfE, 2016), however the teachers I worked with adopted a democratic approach to behaviour management, thus the children had a sense of agency and were able to maintain a pro-active role in the research. While pupil voice is seemingly celebrated in the school where the research was undertaken, it became apparent through the research that some voices were being heard or listened to more than others. This may be due to adults paying attention to acquiescent views, or possibly due to children feeling that their views would not be taken seriously or listened to (Hill, 2005), or even children's perceptions that their views may get them into trouble.

As discussed previously, children may often feel that the usual mechanisms for garnering pupil voice do not take their concerns seriously or represent the individual (Cox and Robinson-Pant, 2005). This was reflected in the selection of the school values which were selected by the adults in the school; the 'consultation' was the adults sharing the already selected values with the children. The staff were given a list of words chosen by the diocese from which they selected four using a diamond 9 approach, prioritising and justifying their choices. The foundation governor, who was the vicar of the church linked to the school, rejected the value Trust and replaced it with Hope, a decision which staff were unhappy with due to the deeply spiritual nature of the concept. This could suggest that the lack of consultation with the children by the staff was a reflection of the lack of ownership felt by them regarding all the values, thus them feeling that their voices had not been listened to.

I piloted the Self-Characterisation and RGTs with individuals in order to develop my skills in using the techniques as well as in the analysis. I discovered that both methods could be uncomfortable for some individuals due to the deeply personal reflection required. As a result of this I decided to adapt the methods to enable the children to reflect on their school experiences rather than on themselves. I also found that it was important with the Self-Characterisations to give the participants control over how they shared as well as what they shared in order to ensure an inclusive and accessible approach. I developed this further in the Self Characterisation session through consulting with the children on their preferred method of recording. The RGT was adapted as a result of the pilot, using themes elicited from the Self-Characterisations to ensure all participants had a voice in each stage of the research. The Values Group work was not piloted as it was designed as a response to the Self-Characterisations to elicit the children's perspectives on the school values and designed in collaboration with the teachers and the children. The research took place in the two Year 4 classrooms of the school and the participants were accessed initially through the gatekeeper (Head Teacher), then through parental or guardian consent, and in consultation with the class teachers. The children were made aware throughout the process that they were free to withdraw at any time and that this would have no negative consequences for them. The sample consisted of both classes, only those with returned parental consent were able to contribute to the research, with 41 participants; 19 girls and 22 boys and one consent form returned withholding consent (42 responses).

### **Self-Characterisation**

My initial plan was to complete Self-Characterisations with six children, and to then do the RGTs with the same children. On working with the children over the year it became clear that this would have been inconsistent with the ethos of the research due to the exclusivity of selecting six children, thus effectively ignoring and disregarding the other children's perspectives. Enabling every child to participate if they wanted to through a variety of methods became an essential part of the research.

The initial method was the Self-Characterisation in which the children were introduced to the idea of telling the story of a typical day for them at school with themselves as the main character. This meant that all the experiences and observations throughout the day were held at the centre of the process rather than the classic Self-Characterisation which tells the story of them. For the purposes of this research it was important to gather data around their experiences and perceptions of school. The Self-Characterisations sessions lasted for one hour, but some children wanted to take them home to finish them, returning them in the following week. In consultation with the class teachers it

was important to maintain an inclusive approach, thus all had the opportunity to complete the Self-Characterisations.

Self-Characterisations, while lengthy to analyse eliciting a high volume of constructs (Denicolo *et al.*, 2016) were an incredibly time effective method for gaining 36 accounts or data sets, gathering 36 accounts of school experiences in two one hour sessions with five children (with parental consent) absent. The method enabled the children to record their individual experiences in their own way ensuring that all children were able to access the activity and represent their experiences in the most appropriate way for them (Greene and Hill, 2005; Cooper and Kellett, 2017). The activity was framed using the research question with the learning objective shared with the class being for them to share with me their experiences and thoughts about school. The lesson was planned rigorously leading to all children being able to access the activity and complete the Self-Characterisations. The data produced represents a sketch of how school was for each of those individuals at that time ensuring validity or credibility of the research, offering trustworthiness and dependability rather than reliability in line with an interpretivist approach (Savin-Baden and Howell Major, 2012; Denicolo *et al.*, 2016).

Ethical standards underpinned the planning and delivery of the activity. Care was taken to focus on the child's experience at school rather than the child, slightly removing the method from therapeutic roots which may have left the children vulnerable. Children were reminded throughout the session of their right to participate or withdraw with no consequence or need to give a reason (Alderson and Morrow, 2004). The session began with a clear exposition of the intentions of the activity with questions encouraged to ensure informed consent; the questions were mainly focused on identifiability and whether they would get into trouble for sharing their thoughts honestly (Westcott and Littleton, 2005). As a researcher, it is an important responsibility is to ensure that participants are not identifiable, this may be through the processing and presenting of data, rephrasing if a comment identifies a participant, or choosing not to include the data if this compromises their confidentiality (Clough and Nutbrown, 2012). For this research to be meaningful, it was important and ethical to share the opinions and findings with the head teacher in accordance with the children's wishes, maintaining their confidentiality (Emond, 2005).

An unexpected factor in this session was when I was asked by a child if I really wanted the truth as adults, in his experience, rarely meant that this was what they wanted (Alderson and Morrow, 2004). This was a key question, particularly as one of the school values is honesty and was a theme which ran throughout the research. The relationship I had built with the children and the recognition that I was not their teacher, but an independent researcher, helped with this question as trust had

been built over the year, with the data produced supporting this. The explicit addressing of the power imbalance with the participants appeared to expose some uncomfortable truths in the data. However, it is important to acknowledge that for some children, the Self-Characterisations may still have presented an image they thought would please me due to the social expectancy effect (Greene and Hill, 2005; Hill, 2005).

Observing the importance of parental and guardian consent meant that while all children were keen to participate, some children's voices were not represented in the research, in particular a child in care who had participated fully and enthusiastically in the session, something which he did not often do. This reiterated the frustration of observing the adult's withdrawal of consent by not returning the consent form over the child's right to be heard (Hill, 2005).

Kelly would use Self-Characterisations as part of his credulous approach, 'if you do not know what is wrong with a person, ask him, he may tell you' (Kelly, 1991:322). The intention was to use the Self-Characterisations in this way to gain an understanding of the children's life at school, but additionally to identify themes and to elicit elements for the subsequent Repertory Grids. Kelly (1991) could be seen to support this approach by suggesting that the use of Self-Characterisation in clinical practice could present hypotheses which could be further explored at a later date.

In the introduction to the task, the children were told that they were going to write a story with themselves as the star in which they would write/create/draw a storyboard/dictate a narrative of a typical day at school for them and it had to be in the third person. The children presented their ideas in the way they chose, this resulted in stories, comic strips, pictures with annotations as dictated to adults and non-consecutive mind maps. The lesson plan below describes the process.

- *Explain to the class that our activity today is to produce a piece of work (written, storyboard, cartoon strip) in which they are the star of the story about their day at school.*
- *Discuss with the class that this is a time for us to find out what school is like for them, what they like, don't like, want to change and Miss xxxx would also like to share this with others to make sure that we are getting it right for you. As I am having to write for University, my job will be to look at their ideas and themes and write these up, both for Miss xxxx and my research.*
- *Make sure that all understand that their names will be taken off before they go to Miss xxxx and my research.*
- *Take questions and suggestions for how it could look. Emphasise that this is their experience at school, so more of an autobiographical task than a story writing task.*
- *However, the tricky thing is that they cannot write "I", it has to be in the third person. They could write it as the story of ... (but it needs to be real), create a cartoon strip, or any other suggestions we agree on.*
- *There has to be a clear narrative to the piece so they talk about each part of the school day, from arriving in the morning right up to going home time. One suggestion may be to say what you did, how it made you feel and suggest reasons why your character (you!) may have felt like that.*

*Figure 1 Lesson plan notes introducing the classes to Self-Characterisation*

Kelly suggests that the use of the third person is to create a believable person rather than an idealised, or conversely, a negative version of themselves and may also help to objectify the situation and see themselves in the context of the school (Kelly, 1991). This approach is a conscious adaptation of the Self-Characterisation model as I wanted the research to be their perceptions of the school in relation to them, rather than a therapeutic intervention, for which a whole class setting would have been wholly inappropriate. However, it is inevitable that, when sharing their perceptions of the school, there were elements of a character sketch due to the nature of the task and the inability to split experiences from the person.

Kelly (1991) suggests that the use of the third person enables the writer to write more objectively and to put himself in perspective. Exploring how the children had found the use of the third person I found that twenty-three pupils were able to write in the third person consistently, eight used both third person and first person while five used first person throughout. Of the five, three pupils were identified as having English as an Additional Language (EAL), one as having Additional Educational Needs (AEN), and one pupil considered a high achieving pupil. This led me to question whether the high achieving pupil was an anomaly and that pupils with EAL may have found the third person a barrier, however nine pupils from the twenty-three who maintained third person were identified as having EAL and two out of the eight who used both were identified as being EAL learners and did not have the same first language. On interrogating the Self-Characterisations which used both, it was interesting to note that the participants tended to move to using first person when they presented a strong emotion about an issue. Kelly presents the importance of using the third person for this process; much of the criticism of PCT is that it does not take note of emotion (Chiari, 2013). It would be interesting to explore Self-Characterisations in the first person, however, there would be no differentiation as there was with the switch from third person to first person when the children experienced a strong emotional response.

The use of the third person appeared a challenge to the majority of the year group. Many of those who maintained third person throughout had self-corrected to do so. When presenting this work at the Values in Education Conference, I was questioned as to how young I felt it feasible to use the Self-Characterisation method. Using this experience, I would not use this approach in this way (as a whole class activity) with any younger than year 4 children due to the challenges the use of third person presented, while Fransella and Bannister (1977) caution against using this technique with children under ten. I would, however, consider using a doll or representative figure as the child and ask them to tell their story in this way, but on an individual basis. The Mosaic approach would also



lend itself to this, providing alternative means of communication for younger children and valuing them as experts in their own lives (Clark and Moss, 2011).

From the Self-Characterisations I identified issues (or hypotheses) to use as elements for the repertory grids. I began by attributing + or – as to whether the issues were discussed in a negative or positive way, but stopped this as I felt it was my interpretation of their perceptions rather than an unclouded presentation of their thoughts.

I began collating the children's views on each of the issues, but stopped when I refocused on my questions. This has led me to question whether I should have kept my research focus more flexible (i.e. Children's perceptions of their school) and whether it is possible to develop the questions from the Self-Characterisations rather than having a pre-set agenda. One challenge with this approach is that to have a proposal approved, the research questions must be agreed prior to any research. It may have been better to gain approval in two stages, with the initial exploratory question as the initial proposal and the subsequent research questions arising from the initial research, but this unstructured approach may have led to an unsatisfactory research project.

As a process for collecting pupil voice, Self-Characterisation appeared to be an effective way of working in a way which the children enjoyed. My evidence for this is that all children were keen to contribute and requested that we could do it again, including those whose parents had not given consent. Those children had their work validated by discussing it with me, and were told that it would not be involved in my research report but that I was happy to share their ideas with their head-teacher if they would like me to. As an answer to my research questions, it could be considered that the focus was too broad, however, I found the omission by all pupils of the school values interesting as my initial thoughts had been that the school values were at the heart of the school and the school day for all which raised the question of ownership of the values. The content of the Self-Characterisations was pupil selected; the school values were selected by the adults in the school.

In conclusion, the Self-Characterisation approach was effective in enabling the participants to present their perceptions of school. There were many themes which would have been interesting to research, but they did not link to the research questions, however, I was able to use them as elements for the Repertory Grids. The use of third person was challenging but not impossible and has provided further insights into the data which I will explore in the next chapter. It was essential in this context to allow the children to use their preferred medium to tell their story as insisting on a written text may have excluded some pupils and undermined their sense of ownership (Hill, 2005).

## Values Group Work

My initial research question was to explore perceptions of the school values. It was expected that the school values would feature in the Self-Characterisations, which would enable us to see where year 4 saw the values in action but they were not included by any of the children. The Self-Characterisations were insightful and useful in eliciting elements for the repertory grids, but to discover the participant's perceptions and feelings about the values I chose to present them explicitly for discussion. In order to explore the pupil's perceptions about the values, I devised a small group session using PCT approaches to explore the values which was much easier to plan when I considered the children rather than the method (Westcott and Littleton, 2005). Pope and Denicolo (2001:91) note Kelly's belief that as constructive alternativists it is important to 'engage in theoretical extension, elaboration and, indeed, reformation to inform our practice by extending our horizons'. This client-centred approach enabled me to develop a structure using PCT principles in a way which was more relevant to the participants providing the children with the freedom to communicate their ideas in alternative ways, such as photographs and drawings (Ravenette, 1977). Maxwell (2006) uses a 'drawing and its opposite' approach and describes it as a child centred approach which enables the researcher to gain an idea of both the child's experience and self-perception.

The group interviews took place during the week following the Self-Characterisations over three afternoons. The five nominal groups consisted of six children, focusing on one value at a time. The children were free to leave at any time and were reminded of this throughout the sessions. Conversely they were also allowed to stay on if they wished, leading to some participants remaining for the entire afternoon and a fluidity to the groups, hence the interviews continued for longer than anticipated. The group sessions occurred in a separate, unused classroom in the school and access to the participants was with a nominal group which children were free to join or leave as they pleased, in one case leading to a group of nine. A total of thirty-three children participated over the three sessions with thirteen choosing to participate in more than one session.

This was an effective and efficient way of gathering data as it gathered a number of opinions in a short amount of time, with the small groups enabling discussion, unlike the Self-Characterisations which were individual. The discussions encouraged participants to justify their perspectives while still eliciting the individual voice in the drawings and examples. Using a different method to the Self-Characterisation ensured that all participants could find the method which suited them best, those who chose to contribute to more than one session may have found the method more accessible than the Self-Characterisation. The activity was explicitly linked to the research questions ensuring a

transparency and honesty which is essential in ethical research (Alderson and Morrow, 2004; Hill, 2005).

The children were given the choice as to the method of recording the data. They chose to use their drawings and examples rather than using a video or audio recording, thus respecting them as co-constructors of the research which can be unusual in research, particularly with children (Greene and Hill, 2005). Using the concrete data rather than audio recording gave them power to select what they wanted to share without self-censoring their conversations (Alderson and Morrow, 2004), meaning that a number of extremely interesting discussions took place, none of which I could use in the research.

- What do you think about the value xxxx-what does it mean to you at school?
- Either write or draw an example of when you saw or experienced the value “xxxx”
- So what is the opposite of this value at school (use laddering)
- Either write or draw an example of this that at school
- Looking at the scale, put your picture or drawing on the most appropriate place. Does this happen always, mostly, sometimes, occasionally or never?

*Figure 2 Script for values group work*

The framework I decided to use was to explore each pupil’s personal ‘range of convenience’ around the values (Kelly, 1991). While the values are discussed at length in classrooms and assemblies, I wanted to gain an understanding of the participants’ notions of the values by establishing their dichotomous constructs, but presenting a dyadic rather than a triadic procedure to elicit the participants’ constructs. Triadic elicitation involves identifying how two things or elements are the same and different from a third in line with Kelly’s Dichotomy Corollary (Kelly, 1991). Dyadic elicitation offers two elements to compare, highlighting the differences between the two (Fransella and Bannister, 1977). I adapted this by providing the value as an element, then asking the children to identify the opposite of that value. Removing the use of the grid and creating an alternative presentation of these made this a more inclusive process, as did the use of small groups. I also adopted a Solution Focused Therapy (SFT) technique of asking the children what it looked like, or an example of when they had witnessed or been part of that value. SFT could be seen as congruent with PCT in that a central tenet to the theory is that the client is the expert in their own lives and has the capacity to change and improve their lives (Ratner *et al.*, 2012). It could be suggested that the small groups encouraged group answers and censorship (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009), however, the variation in the descriptions and stories around the values suggest this was not the case. Using the children’s enthusiasm for the Self-Characterisations and recognising that some may want to draw pictures, I created a script for each value.

In the small groups we explored the children's bipolar constructs of the four values and scaled how often they saw their examples of the values and their opposites in practice. This is underpinned by Kelly's dichotomy corollary which is generally elicited by triadic elicitation, however (Salmon, 1976) suggests that dyadic elicitation works well when the triadic approach is too challenging.

In small groups we thought about one value at a time and on a piece of paper folded into 4, on the top left hand side wrote what the values meant to them at school. Underneath they thought about a time when they had seen that in action and either drew a picture of it or wrote about it. On the top right hand side of the sheet they described or depicted their definition of the opposite of the value and bottom right represented a time when they had seen it happening. For the next stage each pupil tore their sheet in half, so love and the perceived opposite of love were separated. One child drew a scale with Always, Mostly, Sometimes, Occasionally and Never (after discussing these terms), then the children put their sheet where they thought it should be. The five-point scale may be considered too complex for this age group (Salmon, 1976), so I presented a three point and five point and they chose the five point. The data may help to evaluate whether this was utilised effectively, however in conversations, all children who participated were able to articulate their reasons for choosing where to put their ideas.

This approach generated useful and insightful data and appeared to enable more children to participate in a time-efficient way. It would be difficult to generalise this approach as it was designed with knowledge of the participants in order to enable them to share their perceptions of the school values in practice (Pope and Denicolo, 2001; Westcott and Littleton, 2005). However, it did give me confidence in the effectiveness of adapting PCT techniques to meet the needs of the participants.

### **Repertory Grid Technique**

The third stage of the process was to conduct repertory grids with a selection of pupils. Kelly describes the use of the grid as a way of identifying a problem, which links with his clinical work and the therapeutic use of the grid, however this was not the intention in this research. There are many applications in which the RGT is used, however the basic function of the method is to elicit the participant's view of the world (in this case school), using their own language in their own way (Jankowicz, 2004).

The repertory grid interviews were conducted individually with six children. The interviews were conducted individually in spaces which minimised interruption, however the reality of working in a school meant that while interruptions were minimised, they were not eliminated. The relationships

we had built helped by knowing when participants were happy to continue, or wished to wait until any interruptions had finished.

The sessions took between thirty minutes and one hour and the six children (three boys and three girls) were selected using purposive sampling in collaboration with the class teachers and as a result of wanting to explore issues they had raised in their Self-Characterisations. The RGT was an appropriate way of gathering data with the participants as it enabled us to explore the internalisation of the values and to explore the participant's views about their school experiences. This helped them to develop a deeper level of insight into their own values which will be explored in the following chapter. While the RGT can provide generalised, quantitative data, this was not the intention or aim of this research. It was rather to capture and explore individual responses to the research questions which the idiosyncratic nature of this method lends itself to highly effectively.

While six children were selected, they were reminded of their right to withdraw at any time throughout the process. Participants were reminded that their responses would be anonymised and everything we co-constructed was checked to ensure that they were happy for me to include their contributions, and that they were happy that I had told their stories using their words.

The time consuming aspect of the RGT meant that it was not feasible to work with a larger number of children. To address this and to maintain a wider range of voices in this stage of the research the elements were elicited from the Self-Characterisations by collating all the themes which were identified by the children. Elements can be provided by the interviewer or elicited with the participant (Pope and Denicolo, 2001), however it could be argued that it is more true to Kelly's (1991) model of man as scientist and choice corollary to elicit the elements with the participants rather than providing them. The use of the elements elicited from the Self-Characterisations was intended to give choice to the participants while enabling other voices to have input into the repertory grids. The ideal may have been to conduct a Self-Characterisation with every consenting child and member of staff followed by a repertory grid interview with each participant using their elements elicited from their Self-Characterisations, however time limitations made this impractical. Instead, I used all the issues identified in the Self-Characterisations as elements in an attempt to allow other voices to be heard in the interview. It is generally recognised that all elements should be homogenous (Pope and Denicolo, 2001; Jankowicz, 2004), however, using the themes elicited from the Self-Characterisations, elements were not all of a type. The teachers were offered all the elements to choose from with the option of adding any elements which had not been identified and considered important to them. It was interesting to note that the elements selected were not of a type. With two children I replicated this approach and again the elements selected were not

homogenous. In order to test the process, I gave four children all the elements elicited from the Self-Characterisations which were lessons or sessions in the school day with an option to add any elements of this type.

To conclude the interview, I asked the participants to look for patterns in their thoughts (which I had recorded using their own words) and identified patterns which I had noticed and checked that they were in accordance with their thinking.

Two of the Repertory Grids conducted with children allowed them to choose freely from the elements elicited from the Self-Characterisations and to add their own if they wanted to. This resulted in them both selecting elements which were not homogenous. Pope and Keen (1981) propose that having elements to select from ensures the participant chooses those most relevant to themselves and their experiences. Pope and Denicolo (2001) refine this by suggesting that there should be a homogeneity to the elements to ensure ease of construing. I used this approach with the remaining four children by allowing them to select only from the elements elicited from the Self-Characterisations which related to a time in the school day or lesson. My findings were that while the homogenous elements appeared more accessible for the participants, they tended to result in superficial constructs which did not allow for laddering. Laddering can be used to deepen the understanding of and clarify constructs, both for the participant and the researcher (Fransella and Bannister, 1977). Laddering up consists of questioning in a way which seeks to find out why a person thinks in a certain way, laddering down involves finding out how the participant thinks, helping them to think of examples (Jankowicz, 2004). The non-homogenous elements led to richer discussion using laddering and resulted in constructs which appeared to allow more insight and understanding of the participant's views about school than the homogenous elements allowed for. There was a more creative approach by the two participants which, while I attributed it to the elements, could have been representative of the participants. It may have been useful to repeat the Repertory Grids later with the six children, offering the converse of their previous experiences, however, I was concerned that either group may feel they had given incorrect answers.

One of the pupils who was using the homogenous elements adapted the elements to talk about the themes which were important to her, which may not have appeared to link directly with the elements selected. This interview required adoption of credulous listening (Kelly, 1991) as she was presenting me with the image of how she would like it to be at school for her as a factual recount; this could have been viewed as conflicting with observations of her in class and in the playground. In future research I would like to explore this further, but would have to be mindful that the purpose in this case was for research, not as a therapeutic intervention.

## Conclusion

The three methods enabled me to work in an inclusive way with all the participants. The adaption of the Self-Characterisation technique meant that all children including bi-lingual learners and those identified as having additional needs were able to access the activity in a meaningful way. Some used first person, but the essence and flexibility of the method ensured that all were able to share their experiences and perceptions of their school day, while the school values were not mentioned or referred to.

The values group work was equally inclusive and all participants contributed enthusiastically. However, the scaling proved challenging for some participants, leading me to question its usefulness and ultimately abandoning it. The method enabled the children to express their views and experiences on the values in their own preferred way.

The RGTs were more challenging and the use of triadic elicitation may have proved challenging for other members of the class, but the participants selected met the challenge with confidence.

While the methods may be described as challenging and complex (Fransella and Bannister, 1977), using a variety of flexible techniques enabled the children to contribute the research in the most appropriate way for them (Greene and Hill, 2005). It is the responsibility of the researcher to devise child led methodologies and techniques (Westcott and Littleton, 2005) regarding the method as a methodology. This methodology underpins the axiology of PCT and as a flexible tool to be used and adapted to meet the needs of the participants (Ravenette, 1977; Pope and Denicolo, 2001).

## Chapter 5

### Introduction to the participants in their own words and pictures

It is important to me as a researcher to introduce the participants before the Findings and Analysis chapter in order for them to be recognised them in the research as individuals and not to become subsumed in the data. Research is often concerned with the data rather than the individuals; I view the idiosyncrasies of the participants as a key part of my research, not just part of the appendices. I have chosen to do this using excerpts taken from their Self-Characterisations which seem to encapsulate something of the essence of each individual child. All the spellings and phrasing are the children's own. Some children were absent for the Self-Characterisations; I have chosen not to include them in this section as it would be my perspective of them, so not fitting with the ethos of PCT.

There were 41 participants, 20 girls and 21 boys. 14 children were bi-lingual learners and 6 were identified as having additional needs.

#### Vicky



*As Vicky trudged up the stairs, she just remembered that they had art today and she **loved** art.*

#### Hannah



*Today it was a church assembly and we got to do acting about noah's ark. They picked 12 people and Hannah was noah's wife.*

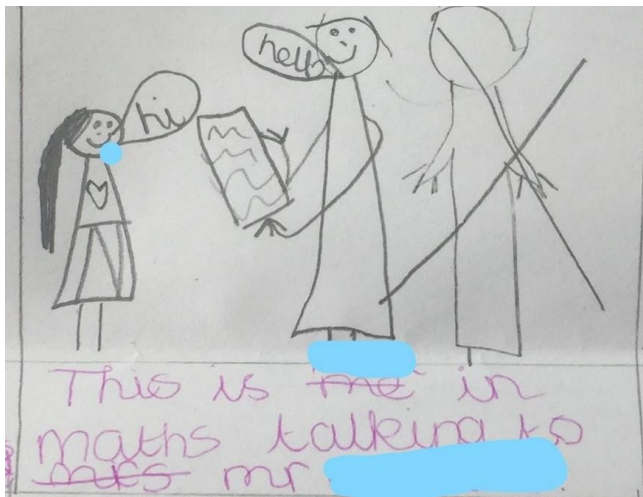


## Ash

The boy was quite upset as he couldn't understand the word problems. Miss Lawrence was quite clear but things wasn't in his mind. He thought it was Friday but it was MONDAY. He was annoyed at what he had thought and didn't produce any work. The teacher was quite upset at him so he had to stay in for ...LUNCH

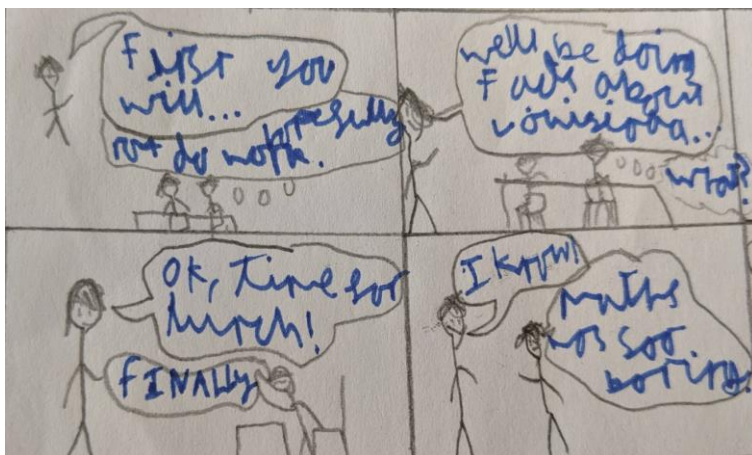
Art was his favourite lesson as he got to do what he wanted to do. But it had to do with the topic of his lesson. This lesson he drew a traditional Greek myth pot and the teacher thought it was beautiful.

## Kim



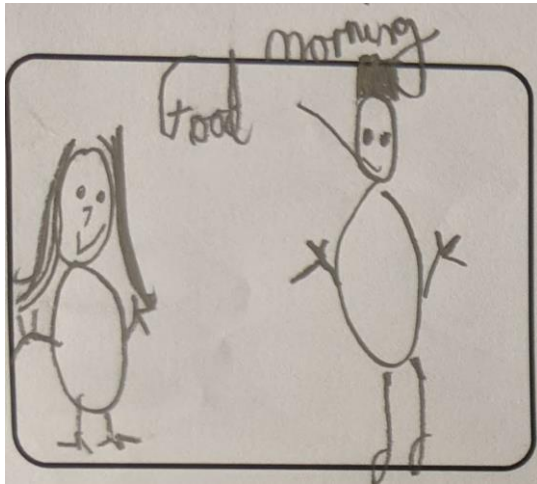
After break it was maths "I don't like maths" said Kim she said that she likes English more also DANCE! That is her favorite

## Sam



I wonder what we are doing today?  
Hopefully not maths...

## Josiah



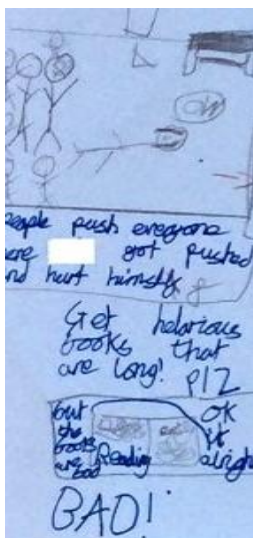
*The first thing I do is good morning  
to my teacher  
Me reading a book and that book  
was good. Jamaica I learned a lot.*

## Noah



*Today Noah got up and got dressed  
into his school uniform and he done  
my hair into a swish desine. Then  
Noah had breckfast (co-co pops).  
When he got to school he put out  
the chairs again. Then, he handed  
out the Engilish books and Maths  
books witch was hard because they  
were realy heavy.*

## Rami



*PE shins the day it like an angel has just come down  
and saved someone life. PE is amazing it's the best it  
brightens the day if he was sick and it's pe day I  
wouldn't care he wouldn't anyways it's like him getting  
an I-Phone 20S is'nt out yet but whatevers yea it that  
good*

## Finlay

*Aproching the school Finlay carfully took on step into school and every worry was over, and a big smile crept across Finlay's face, and Finlay got his Equipment then sat down and started to read, Also a lot of nervs where because It was Friday and Finlay could win a headteacher award!*

*It felt like forever because he was having so much fun. Finlay was It then Taz was It it was just madness.*

*The best day of his life was over.*

## Seamus

*After the assembly we started English. It was very boring, so I might skip it! OK I skiped English so now I'm outside for break. I'm now trading pokemon cards oh there goes the bell. Now what's next? Ugh math! Wait yes! I'm missing math and going to rocksteady! We are playing song 2 by Blur for our song and I'm drumming. I mist all of math so now it's lunch. Do you really want to know what I ate? I thought not.*

## Francesca

*Francesca checked her work perfectly and put one smiley face on the rocket. The english was really easy but still a but hard!*

*Francesca likes arithmatic work because you are recaping what you already know.*

*Francesca really like this game. She started being a runner and she was amazing and did a rouser each time.. When she was a feilder, she tried to get a ball each time. Francesca really likes PE because she likes running.*

## Philippe



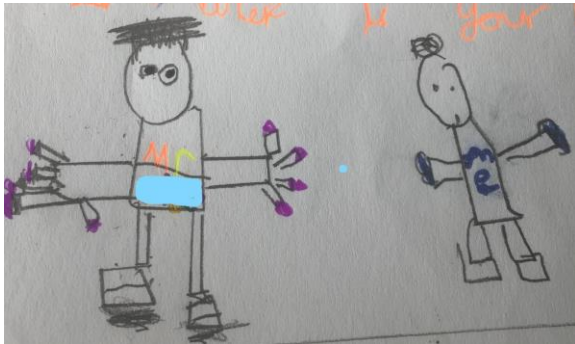
*Today Philippe woke up early because it was Wednesday he loved Wednesdays because he plays tennis.*

*Philippe's team won! He was happy because scored 8 goals and it was nearly the end of the day!*

## Jamilah

*As they were going through their maths Jamilah found it easy like usual. Jamilah was just about to finish her last question until it was lunchtime. Jamilah liked lunchtime because Miss Lawrence would let her stay inside to do jobs or to stay inside colouring.*

## Ephren



*Don't you feel sorry for me I hate school" that I have the best teacher Miss Lawrence (favourite in school years)*

## Saffron

*Saffron grinned today was Wednesday her faviroute day of the week but today exelled. She got to wear her new summer dress, for breakfast she had her usal and a cupcake!  
Then maths Saffron enjoyed maths but today was better they did mental artemetic and did 71 questions and Saffron got 71 greens! "Yipee" screamed Saffron as she ran out to lunch "Shh" whispered Mr Garcia year 2 were doing their SATS tests.*

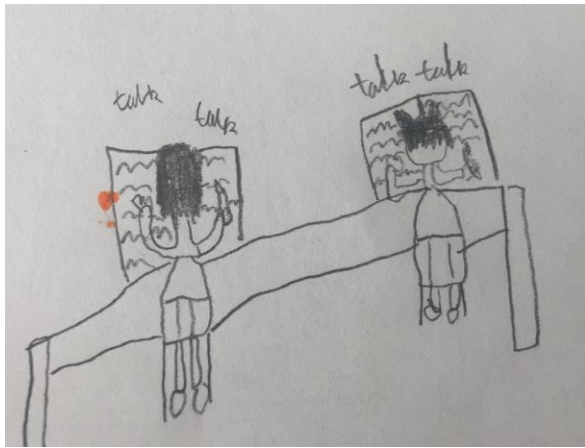
## Seb



## Bethany

*Bethany liked breack but she just didn't like it when Miss Potter always called out to you to not hang around when someone people just want to read. When Bethany reached the safety of her friends. They played cach and then finally the bell ran.  
She thought how lucky shee was to not be in the dinner hall. She preffered being outside because the floor wasn't cacked in left over food.*

## Kieran



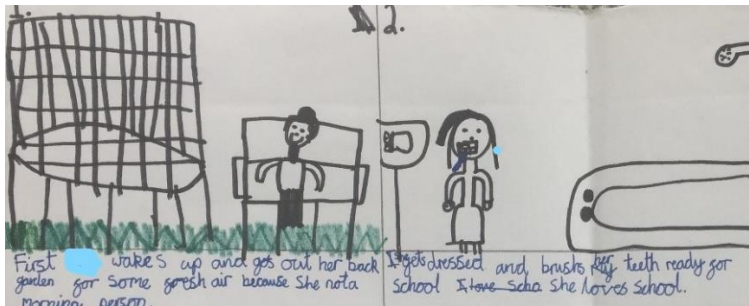
When they informed about this there was a few groans, an especially one from Kieran. English isn't his favourite topic. Anyway he had to do it so he very slowly got on with his myth. After about half an hour Kieran's partner, Vicky started talking to him. He couldn't help getting distracted and he just started to talk and that is why it's not his favourite subject.

## Jack

Seeing the school gates Jack says in his head "this is going to be a long day of work". When he gets into school it says on the board "check your writing and maths books for any NOWS or pinks. Which Jack don't like to do.

I did hit the ball the furthest and I done a full rounder. Then we swaped over and Jack was a fielder. No-one passed to him but he didn't care because he had fun.

## Kelli



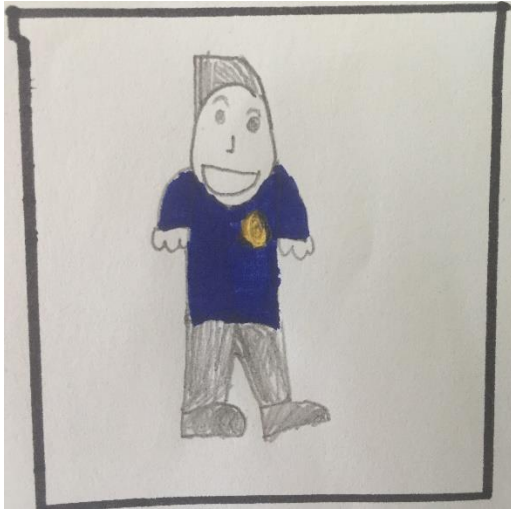
First Kelli wakes up and gos out her back garden for some fresh air because she not a morning person. When she gets to school she chooses her equipment she trys to get a good pen it never happens.

## Briony

"It's a Monday! The worst day of the week!" Briony hated Mondays, as much as elephants hate mice. And she bet that Mondays hated her too. Briony wanted to stay at home but knew she had to go to school, so from then she decided that she would rush through the whole school day so she wouldn't have to go through the pain.



## Majed



*While going to assembly he wanted to get nominated that he actually got nominated for Well done assembly he was very proud of himself. He was nervous to get a 1/12 score but he wanted to get a full score which is 12/12 and he got what he wanted.*

## Harry



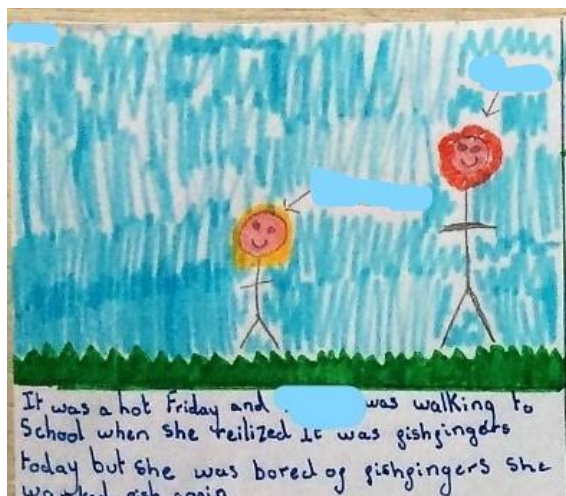
*He likes maths it is fun but some time it is very hard and he can not understand what Miss Lawrence is doing so he gets lost in maths and does not understand what she is saying/talking about. I like the afternoon because we get to relax and it is not too hard. So he thinks this was a good day and he enjoyed it*

## Joe



*Joe saw his friend Seb and called dibs on the chair next to him. (But a girl got there before me.) Finally Joe's English lesson came for an hour and a bit. "great". (not). "Yes Joe just survived a whole English lesson without dying! Joe rushed out and found Seb in the playground. "RING!" Breaks over. Help me, Joe going out of the classroom on his knees because Joe had nearly died from that maths lesson he had for an hour. "Well I'm glad it's lunchtime"*

## Poppy



*When she approached school Poppy said goodbye to her mum and hoped assembly wouldn't be as long as yesterdays.*

*When Poppy got in on the bord it said "do NOWS and Pinks in your math book & English book" which she never liked to do.*

## Florence



*I get dressed and go toilet and wash myself brush teeth.*

## Serena

*"Yay" shouted serena I'm here in school*

*In maths we were learning about division the hardest thing in my life I got some help from Miss Martin then I understood about division*

*After the dinner I went upstairs and went to my class and asked Miss Lawrence If there any jobs she said yes, she said you can sharp the pencil.*

## Ashley



*Gradually he walked into his mum and dads room and went back to sleep in there so his mum and dad don't tell him of.*

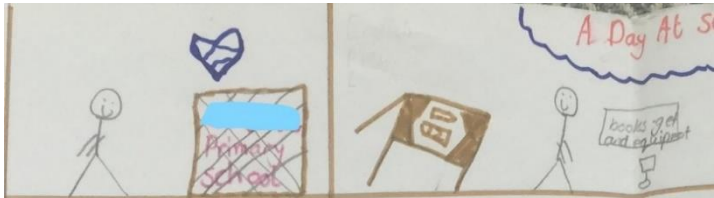
*Today Ashley didn't have to go to assembly which was good because they always bore him.*

### Esther



*Eating her breakfast at a calm past thought about what topic she would do today. When we came back from class we had spellings test and she was really nervous fortunately Esther got 12/12 (smiley face). Next she had English which was actually enjoyable. It was break time after lunch and she enjoyed it.*

### Naveen



*Naveen does not like English but still completes it with no complaint. If a story certainly doesn't like! "No!" "NOT MATHS" cries everyone. Naveen loves maths but others don't! Naveen enjoys it the most. Everybody was happy. Naveen was very happy too. Naveen played rounders. Naveen found it hard but had a lot of fun after that it was snack time and we had snacks.*

### Austin



*Finally break comes all of that writing felt like a sea of writing quite literally Austin only likes ideas not writing.*

### Laura

*Let's just talk about the morning first what Laura did in the morning was she went to ROCK STEADY!!! Laura Played the drums.*

*English was really easy Laura had to write a story. Then it was lunch time. Lunch time was really good because you get to have nice food!!!*



## Ronan

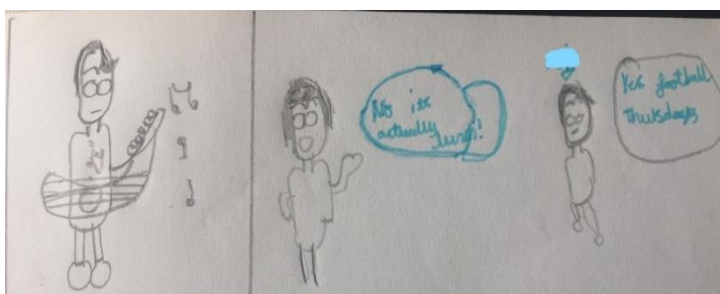


when it was a math session he always had struggled with it and then he always complains about everything and when it is English he is very knowledgeable and he doesn't get a single word wrong and he never ever complain saying I gave up on he just keeps on doing it even if it's hard

## Soraya

Then she got to class and thought "my voice is bad when it is the register". she thought "I'm a great story teller so this will be easy. ... and thought "I'm going to be a footballer" and she was one and she thought "Thank you for letting me be a footballer". Then some tears dropped when she had to get changed. She thought "I'm lazy so I can't change at home and give it back tomorrow" then it was tidying up and stacking chairs time she thought "I don't care because I'm lazy".

## Taz



He entered the plastic, wooden looking door feeling annoyed about school.... BUT I REMEMBERED IT WAS ROCK STEADY AND PE! YES! Rock Steady is my favourite extra-curricular activity. You get to learn new songs and chords. Taz was actually dozing off so Taz was excited because it was PE and. It is his favourite subject ever!

## April

Then she got her equipment and buried her face in her book (Harry Potter) April found it very easy and did the whole sheet in minutes then she helped Laura to finish hers. "I wish lunch was a bit longer" April told Kim.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Children's views and perceptions of their school values and school experiences through PCT approaches**

#### **Outline of chapter and aims**

In this chapter I present the findings from the Self-Characterisations, the values group work and the Repertory Grids and analyse them in line with the school values and with the themes identified by the participants which did not align with the school values. I present the findings in this way to reflect the purpose and process of the research. The Self-Characterisations were the first stage of the research with the intention of discovering the children's perceptions of the school values and to elicit elements for the Repertory Grids. The school values were not mentioned explicitly so small group sessions were devised using PCT strategies. The small groups focused on the four school values as detailed in the Methods section of the previous chapter before completing the Repertory Grids. The Repertory Grid findings are presented lastly in line with the process. Issues raised by the children in the Self-Characterisations were used to provide the elements for the Repertory Grids as a way of including all the participants in each stage of the research. The Repertory Grids also provided the participants with a further opportunity to consolidate their ideas about school having built on reflections in the Self-Characterisations and in the discussions during the values group work.

My ethical positioning underpins the presentation of the findings and analysis. The names of the participants have been changed in order to preserve confidentiality. This has been done using names which take into consideration the cultural and individual significance of the children's real names. I have used children's words and examples throughout, in line with a radical listening approach (Clough and Nutbrown, 2012), ensuring that my analysis of their thoughts is in line with their intentions as much as possible (Chamberlain *et al*, 2019).

#### **Self-Characterisation**

All children in both classes were involved in the Self-Characterisations; 36 with parental consent were used in the research. The Self-Characterisations were analysed by identifying the themes of importance to the participants which mapped against protective factors (Henderson and Milstein, 2003), making links to the school values where possible and appropriate.

Self-Characterisations from 36 children were analysed; the school values were not mentioned explicitly by the children, but reports of the children's school experiences were clearly communicated. From the Self-Characterisations I identified 22 elements and grouped them under the three headings of Relationships, School Routines and Curriculum Areas (see Figure 3).

<b>Relationships</b>	<b>School Routines</b>	<b>Curriculum areas</b>
Teachers	Getting to school	Maths
Children	Reading	Art
Friends	Assembly	PE
Parents	Playtime	Literacy
People pushing	Food	Science
Playing football	Lunchtime	Music
	Home time	Spellings
	Class routine	
	Registration	

*Figure 3 Elements elicited from the Self-Characterisations for the Repertory grids*

Playing football is in the 'Relationships' category as when it was mentioned in the Self-Characterisations it was with reference to social times with friends rather than a Curriculum Area or School Routine. Spellings and Reading were also a little ambiguous as they made reference to regular timeslots where these things happen, but I chose to categorise them under Curriculum Areas as they link to discrete lessons. Relationships are broken down further into Parents, Friends and Teachers in order to clarify the different qualities between those relationships. The children were keen to differentiate between children and friends, with friends being people they chose to be with while children were the others. The other aspect of this is children as opposed to teachers, differentiating between people who share in the school day, but experience it differently. While the elements identified the more concrete parts of the school day, they did not capture the underlying values which the participants expressed in their Self-Characterisations.

Initially I analysed each Self-Characterisation individually, identifying children's own personal values, and making links where the children's values aligned with the school definition of the values rather than a secular definition, however the links were tenuous and contrived. Further analysis enabled

me to identify the children's values as aligning with the six protective factors defined by Henderson and Milstein (2003) of *Caring and Support, Relationships* (or *Pro-Social Bonding*), *Clear, Consistent Boundaries*, *Meaningful Participation* (encompassing *Democracy and Autonomy*), *High Expectations* and *Life Skills*. I drew these from the analysis of the children's Self-Characterisations to analyse their personal values. The identified elements were also able to fit into these six headings with the Parents and Teachers aligning with *Caring and Support*, Friends aligning with *Relationships*, School Routines crossing over between *Clear, Consistent Boundaries*, *High Expectations* and *Life Skills* and Curriculum areas generally fitting in *High Expectations*.

The elements were used in the repertory grids as a way of ensuring all participants were able to input at each stage of the research. I have included the original data alongside the analysis to maintain the authenticity of the research rather than only including my interpretations of the data (Emond, 2005; Hogan, 2005). Focusing on answering the research questions and using all 36 Self-Characterisations means that there is room for future analysis in greater depth of the Self-Characterisations. All participant's names have been changed and any other staff or children mentioned have either been pseudonymised or removed (BERA, 2018).

### **Children's themes**

The absence of any explicit mention of Love, Honesty, Hope and Forgiveness led me to identifying themes of importance to the children in their Self-Characterisations. The children's themes I identified aligned with the six protective factors which build resilience (Henderson and Milstein, 2003), so I chose to present the children's themes grouped under their domains of resilience. Both classes had been learning about resilience, and while this model was not explicitly used by the class teachers, it had been employed by the previous head-teacher.

#### **Provide caring and support**

That this education shall be conducted without blows, rigour, or compulsion, as gently and pleasantly as possible, and in the most natural manner (just as a living body increases in size without any straining or forcible extension of the limbs; since if food, care, and exercise are properly supplied, the body grows and becomes strong, gradually, imperceptibly, and of its own accord. In the same way I maintain that nutriment, care, and exercise, prudently supplied to the mind, lead it naturally to wisdom, virtue, and piety). (*Komensky, 1910:81*)

Comenius, writing in the 17<sup>th</sup> century notes the importance of care in the child's education and development. *Caring and Support* is considered by Henderson and Milstein (2003) as the basis of resilience building; letting the children know that they are valued and cared for aligns with the more

secular definition of the school value Love. For most of the children, this theme is mentioned in their Self-Characterisations, particularly in the initial stages which appears to indicate caring and support underpinning the day for them, whether through practical and positive interactions with their parents, or in greeting their teachers. The sub-categories suggested that relationships with parents, carers and teachers were relationships which provided, or were expected to provide, Caring and Support.

Supportive and loving relationships with parents are described by some children beyond the practical exchanges and interactions which many of the participants describe. Ash hopes that his mum has a safe and joyful day. Poppy draws a picture of her and her Mum smiling; it is of importance to Poppy that her Mum is depicted in her day in a positive way. Esther and Vicky describe positive interactions with their mothers before school.

Hopping out the car *Vicky*, kissed her mum goodbye and hurried to school.  
Once *Esther* arrived at school she kissed her mum and entered the classroom with a big cheerfull smile.

Briony links food and love. Her descriptions are evocative, and lunch seems to create a link to her parents, reminding her that she is cared for (Boxall, 2002).

The only thing that was exciting for her was that she had the best lunch in the whole universe.  
*Briony* ran down the stairs with her lunch box in her hand, dodging people as she went. As she got onto the field, she opened up her lunch box and found pure glory. She had the best parents ever.

Tangible support is also highlighted by Hannah who draws her mother picking her up from school and giving her a Reese's bar. Noah and Seamus describe the secure base of their families at the beginning and end of the day providing caring, and Jamilah describes her Dad taking her to school. In contrast with these examples, Kieran appears to enact the value of Care and Support through his nurturing approach towards his younger sister which also links with *Meaningful Participation* by being trusted to look after his sister.

While the children were asked to focus on their day at school, for these children the relationships with their parents were important to include and it may be the day starting with these representations of Care and Support that are important to them. Kim made links between school and home, describing her excitement at telling her parents about receiving the Head-Teacher's award. 26 children described relationships with school staff and depicted these interactions, both where they recognised a supportive, caring relationship, and where there appeared to be a lack of

this type of relationship. Hannah describes her 'happy teacher'; Josiah describes the first part of his day as a greeting between himself and his teacher and they are depicted smiling at each other. Austin also describes his morning greeting and interaction with Miss Brookes; her name is the only other mentioned in his Self-Characterisation apart from himself.

Finlay describes his class-teacher, and his joy at having Miss Page, the supply teacher who had been his teacher in year 2; Saffron describes speaking happily to the teacher who greets her. Florence draws her class teacher and the teaching assistants who support her while Jamilah describes Miss Lawrence being supportive by allowing her to stay inside at lunchtime. Ephren describes himself as happy because he has the best teacher in the world despite his tricky maths, this sentiment is echoed by Serena, Kieran and Bethany.

As Mrs Wright greeted her (*Bethany*) and she smiled thinking how loveley the staff were. she strolled into the classroom greeted by my faveroute teacher Miss Lawrence.

Bethany describes a positive relationship with Miss Lawrence and other staff but regards Miss Potter, who stopped her reading which Bethany regards as unreasonable, almost as a danger to be avoided.

Bethany liked breack but she just didn't like it when Miss Potter always called out to you to not hang around when someone people just want to read. When Bethany reached the safety of her friends. They played cach and then finally the bell ran.

Throughout the day Ash notes ways that Miss Lawrence cares for him, particularly supporting him with maths which he finds tricky. Ash describes the complexity of this relationship, including the positive aspect of refusing to do his work in order to gain the support he required (Aristotle, 2014).

Miss Lawrence was quite clear but things wasn't in his mind. He (*Ash*) thought it was Friday but it was MONDAY. He was annoyed at what he had thought and didn't produce any work. The teacher was quite upset at him so he had to stay in for ...LUNCH. He had to do lunchtime catch-up because he missed maths as he refused to do his work. But then he understood his maths because he listened to his teacher.

Ash's relationship with his teacher is mentioned throughout his Self-Characterisation; her opinion on his work is important to mention:

This lesson he (*Ash*) drew a traditional Greek myth pot and the teacher thought it was beautiful.

Seb's Self-Characterisation is distinctive in the lack of *Caring and Support* he portrays; the only adult interaction seems to be authoritarian and reprimanding him. He describes his unhappiness at the head-teacher's appointment; it is unclear as to whether this is due to regretting the loss of the previous head-teacher or a dislike of or negative relationship with the new head-teacher.



Positive relationships were prevalent in all but Seb's Self-Characterisation. As well as *Care and Support* being provided by the school staff in order to build resilience (Henderson and Milstein, 2003); participants also identified this as being provided by parents and them towards others.

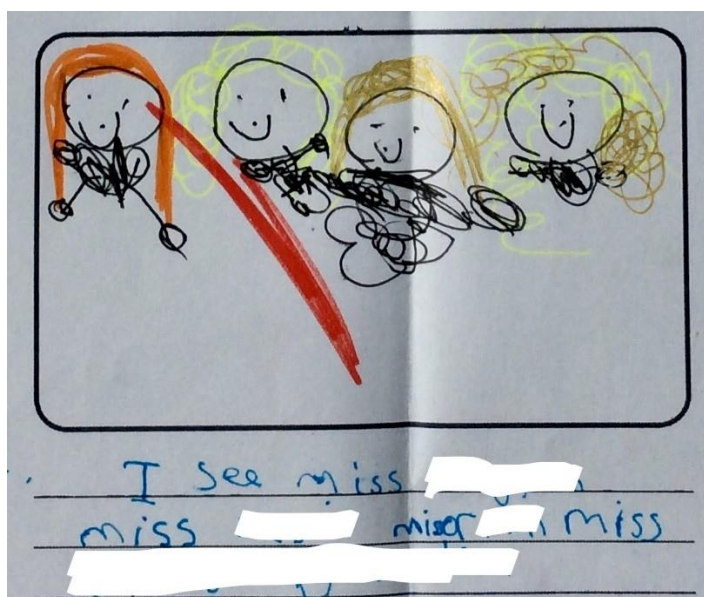
*Care and Support* from the adults or role models enables the children to develop these virtues and values for themselves (Kohn, 1997; Arthur, 2005; Bartlett and Burton, 2014; Mills *et al.*, 2015). This theme resurfaces throughout the research with examples of how the children feel they are cared for and them caring for others, so would appear to be an important value to the participants.

### **Pro-social bonding or Friendship**

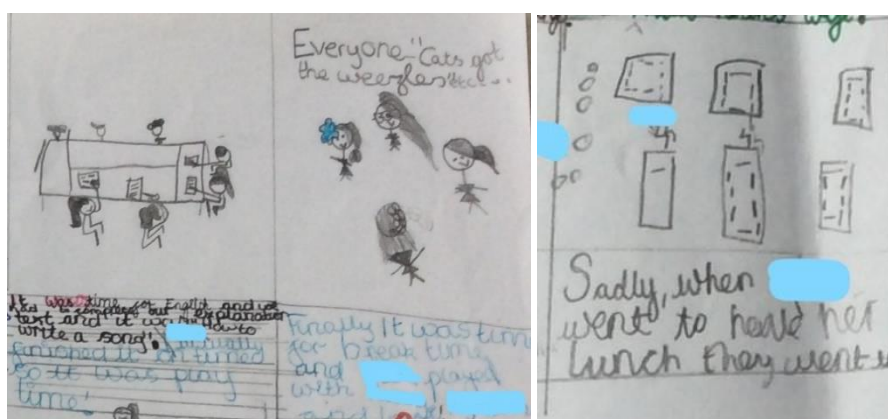
We must take the child as a member of society in the broadest sense, and demand for and from the schools whatever is necessary to enable the child intelligently to recognize all his social relations and take his *part* in sustaining them. (Dewey, 1975:9)

Dewey recognises the essential role of schools in supporting children to develop respectful and positive relationships with each other as members of society. Henderson and Milstein (2003) identify relationships as having a key role in building resilience; this was evident in the children's Self-Characterisations in which 35 out of 36 made reference to friendships or close relationships.

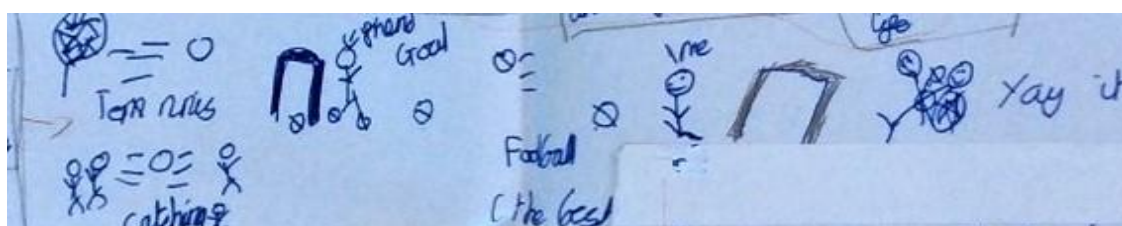
Florence does not mention friends in her Self-Characterisation, but she does note the adults who work with her. However, Ephren does describe playing with Florence; it may be that the relationship is of less importance to Florence than the relationships with the people who support her.



Hannah writes about playing with friends at break and after school; her drawings mean that each friend she draws is identifiable and named. However, she also draws herself alone at lunchtime.



Rami, Seamus, April, Laura, Poppy, Serena and Francesca describe and draw positive interactions with friends at playtime and lunchtime, while Kim describes friends choosing jobs for each other and allocating seats for them at lunchtime. Francesca also describes sadness at having to leave her friends at the end of playtime suggesting a strong attachment. Friendship is important to Ephren who describes his enjoyment of playing with his friends at lunchtime and after school.



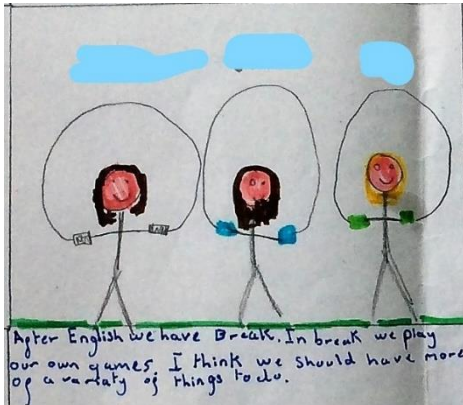


at lunch play I just traded pokemon and played with Joe and Seb. *Seamus*

At break time *April* played with Kim, they played on the poles then on the mushrooms doing arabesques and seeing who could stand on one leg the longest

At break *Laura* played with Kim and April. They played with finlay and Noah. Mostly Class 2.

after that it was playtime I was playing with my friends we were chatting. In lunch I was playing with my friend. *Serena*

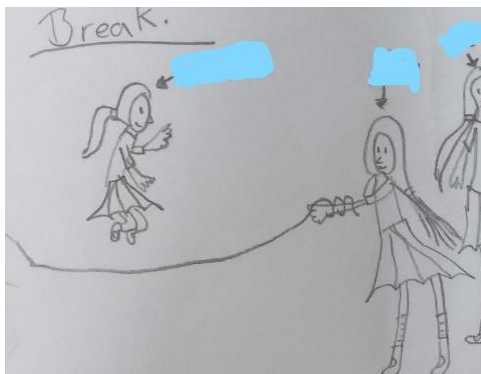


After it was break and she played with Bethany, Mollie, Vicky and Poppy. Sadly it was time to go back into class. When got out to play, she played with Bethany, Briony, Emma, Mollie and Vicky and Poppy. Sadly lunchtime went quickly but just after there was PE. *Francesca*

Although Seb's Self-Characterisation does not present any positive interactions or relationships, Joe describes a close friendship with Seb which underpins his Self-Characterisation, suggesting a strong bond which has survived them being placed in different classes.

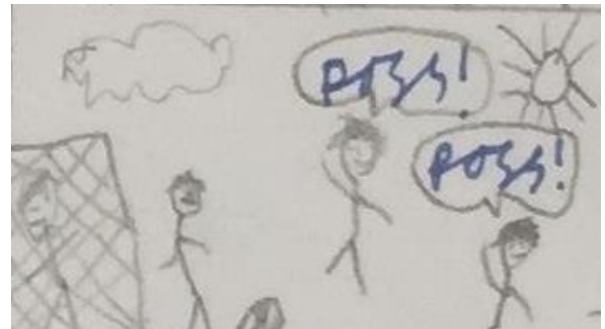
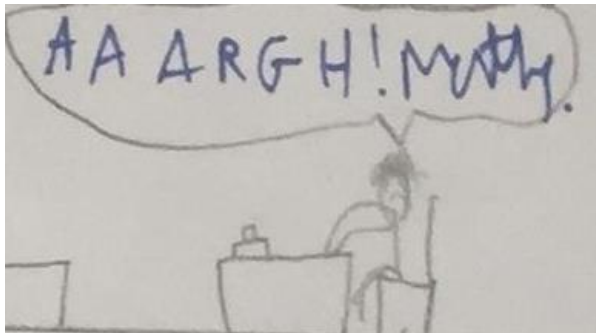
*Joe* saw his friend Seb and called dibs on the chair next to him. (But a girl got there before me.) *sad face.*  
*Joe* rushed out and found Seb in the playground. "RING!" Breaks over.  
*Joe* and Seb talk about the new update on the Xbox 360. "RING!" "Come on, break is over already." "Whooop!!!"

Vicky describes sitting with her friends at lunch and playing with them at playtime; she seems to categorise her friends into BFFs (Best Friends Forever) and buddies.



When *Vicky's* name was called, she grabbed her pack-lunch and sat down with her BFFs and buddy (Saffron, Francesca) (and Tala). After Lunch *Vicky*, Saffron and Francesca couldn't find Tala so they played until the bell went and It was time to go in.

Sam seems animated at playtime, lunchtime and home time and enjoys PE, this demonstrates the importance of collaboration for Sam; at playtime and lunchtime he is with his friends and in PE he collaborates with others. This compares with the isolation he depicts in lessons where he draws himself sitting alone.



Friendships appear important to Sam as this is the only time we see dialogue; it may be that the boundaries in the class make him feel that he can only do this in unstructured times such as lunchtime and playtime. He uses this dialogue to demonstrate shared values in dislike of maths as well as depicting him playing with his friends (Collins, 2008). Sam's values seem to be situated within collaboration and friendship, and his Self-Characterisation demonstrates a feeling of not having opportunities for pro-social activity in the classroom situation.

In line with Sam's values, Finlay describes positive *Relationships* with his friends, thoroughly enjoying playing with them at break and during PE.

All of a sudden It was break *Finlay* played tag with ashley, taz and obviously Seamus. It felt like forever because he was having so much fun. *Finlay* was It then Taz was It it was just madness.

We went in to do pe and it was so fun we were playing football It was the big match of the year Shakespeare v Keats *Finlay* was CF he scored then Josiah scored It was all down to a penalty *finlay* was taking and with rebound he hit It top corner

Taz describes a close friendship with Finlay, and the impact of Finlay losing part of his lunchtime for being 'hyper'; this impacts on Taz as Finlay is his friend and they play football together at lunchtime.

Saffron describes some of the possible issues with friendships; part of friendship is working through conflicts; Saffron describes working with Amelia after she had 'sulked off' when they were playing together.

*Saffron*, Vicky and Francesca played the witch game but Amelia sulked off. They read for a bit after lunch and then she, April, Tom, Kieran and Amelia finished writing their myths out neatly!

Bethany identifies positive *Relationships* with her friends and her enjoyment of playing with them as well as providing a safe base from Miss Potter who reprimanded her, suggesting strong bonds between them.

Kieran's friends are important to him at playtime and lunchtime, as is social interaction in lesson time, although he recognises that it is this social interaction which can sometimes get him into trouble.

When 11 o'clock stroke *Kieran* was let out to break where he and his two friends passed the 15 minutes of break by messing around and trading Pokémon cards. *Kieran* enjoys break but thinks they could have 15 more minutes.

At lunch *Kieran* went outside waiting to be called in And while waiting he went and messed around with Sam, Adam, and Austin. They were playing and trading Pokémon.

Briony uses descriptive language and metaphors to communicate an experience which directly contrasts with her experience in the classroom.

*Briony* rushed through the doors leading to the playground and excitedly jumped up and down as she came over to play catch with Bethany and Mollie. They had fun all playtime, catching and throwing the ball like dogs.

Soraya's aspires to close friendships and seems to value them.

She wanted to be Pullmans assembly because Tadarea is in Pullmans and they're BFFs. She then played with Briony, Mollie and Bethany.  
...she went to the playground and played with Briony, Mollie and Bethany.  
...played with some games with Dhanya as it was wet play. *Soraya*

Throughout the Self-Characterisation Naveen demonstrates sensitivity towards the feelings and experiences of others which seems to identify *Relationships* as important to him. He describes the experiences of others before his own throughout the Self-Characterisation. Other children who wonder about star of the day were hoping it would be them; Naveen does not mention this.

*Naveen* is thinking who is going to be star of the week in his class. This is *Naveen's* favourite assembly.  
"Yes!" cried everyone it is playtime. *Naveen* plays tag with his friends.  
Typical thuds as it is lunch time and children rush on to the playground. *Naveen* goes from back.  
Everybody was happy. *Naveen* was very happy too.

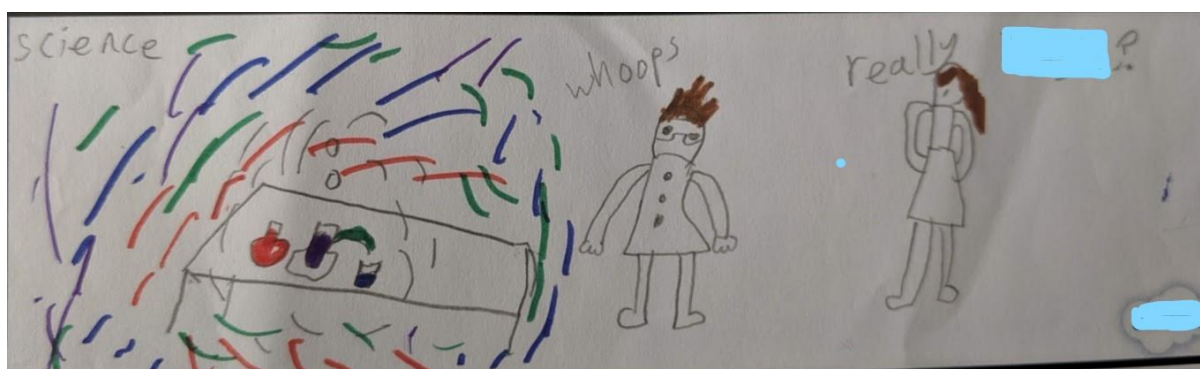
Friendship is a significant element in nearly all the Self-Characterisations. The children record these mostly at playtimes and lunchtimes but describe positive interactions throughout the day. There

seems to be a class identity built as reported by Austin when describing relief that their assembly went well and almost all the children present a positive, reciprocal *Relationships* with their teachers, whether through pictures or through their writing.

### **Clear, Consistent Boundaries**

Children, then, must be subject to a certain law of necessity. This law, however, must be a general one—a rule which has to be kept constantly in view, especially in schools. The master must not show any predilection or preference for one child above others; for thus the law would cease to be general. (Kant, 2001:86)

Kant raises the idea of fairness and consistency in schools, a notion presented by the participants. Many of the children, as well as describing the lessons in the day, describe the class routines which indicates that they are of significance to them. Putting on 'school clothes' is described by Vicky, Ash, Noah and Saffron and drawn by Kim, Majed, Harry, Esther, Ashley and Taz. Seb draws children wearing blue uniform jumpers when sat in assembly, this could indicate a dislike of uniformity as he draws himself wearing a white scientist coat in the only picture where he seems to be enjoying himself.



Children describe the early morning routine of coming in to the classroom, putting their things away, getting their equipment out and generally preparing themselves for the day. While this is done independently, it seems a practised routine which all are familiar and comfortable with and is described by Vicky, Ash, Kim, Finlay, Jamilah, Bethany, Kieran, Kelli, Briony Poppy, Jack, Serena, Naveen, Soraya and April. This is significant as the year group had had a number of teachers over the previous two years and had lacked consistency. Some of the children describe the teachers' roles in maintaining the routine and order of the day, giving instructions to the class throughout in a way which seems to depict security and boundaries and is also noted when this doesn't happen.

When *Vicky's* wonderful teacher Miss B had finished the register she called out all the rows to put away their books and line up boy, girl, boy, girl for assembly.

Miss B had done the register and had told us to put our books away, it was time for spellings. *Hannah*

Then as she was just about to finish the last page of her story Miss Lawrence commanded "Line up for assembly!" *Jamilah*

"Silent read!" boomed Miss Brookes in her usual teachery voice. We all did what we where told and took out are reading books *Joe*

Briony hates that they don't know what they are doing. *Briony*

However, 17 of the children describe the routines but executing them without adult instruction, suggesting a sense of self-determination within the classroom routines.

Taz, Ash, Kieran, Finlay, Briony and Bethany note when boundaries are explicitly held by adults; Taz, Ash, Finlay and Kieran seem accepting of these, but Briony and Bethany seem to rail against the perceived unfairness.

This is particularly interesting as Briony and Bethany were rarely in trouble and appeared compliant in class, whereas Finlay, Kieran and Ash were more used to being reprimanded and vocal in class, suggesting that Bethany and Briony had learned strategies to manage or mask their frustration.

Finlay was running and being hyper so he had to miss 5 minutes of his lunch. *Taz*

He had to do lunchtime catch-up because he missed maths as he refused to do his work. *Ash*

"Uhh!" she sighed, bored by the welcome back assembly, but she maybe sighed a bit too loudly. A teacher close to her heard her and shouted at the innocent (slightly) girl. *Briony*

Bethany liked breack but she just didn't like it when Miss Potter always called out to you to not hang around when someone people just want to read. *Bethany*

Kieran's honesty accepts boundaries set by his teacher; his dislike of English is informed by the knowledge that he may become distracted and subsequently reprimanded.

When they informed about this there was a few groans, an especially one from *Kieran*. English isn't his favourite topic. Anyway he had to do it so he very slowly got on with his myth. After about half an hour *Kieran's* partner, Vicky started talking to him. He couldn't help getting distracted and he just started to talk and that is why it's not his favourite subject.

Overall the class routines are reported in a positive way. Rami, Taz and Majed highlight the occasions when these are not held, with Rami reporting getting injured at playtime by children failing to follow the school expectations. Taz describes the children pushing to get into the classroom as bulls ramming him; Majed describes a noisy classroom and Miss Lawrence not collecting them from the

classroom on time. The Self-Characterisations seem to suggest an acceptance of and desire for clear and consistently held boundaries from the majority of the participants.

### **Meaningful Participation (Democracy, Autonomy and Agency)**

We have already noticed the difference in attitude of a spectator and of an agent or participant. The former is indifferent to what is going on; one result is just as good as another, since each is just something to look at. The latter is bound up with what is going on; its outcome makes a difference to him. His fortunes are more or less at stake in the issue of events. Consequently, he does whatever he can to influence the direction present occurrences take. (Dewey, 1966:215)

Building on the importance of respectful relationships for society, Dewey notes the necessity for meaningful participation in the formation of a democratic society. Henderson and Milstein (2003) identify opportunities for *Meaningful Participation* as essential components for building resilience. This aligns with a democratic approach where children's contributions are valued and considered with opportunities for self-determination and participation (Dewey, 1966; Glasser, 1992).

The tone is set for *Meaningful Participation* by Harry, who asked before we undertook the activity if I really wanted the truth as adults often said that but didn't mean it; a perception commonly held by children (Hill, 2005).

Democracy and autonomy were prevalent themes throughout the Self-Characterisations. Florence is keen to share her independence, possibly as a celebration, but also acknowledging her competency. Florence enjoys doing what the rest of the class do and wanted to do her own Self-Characterisation; she was keen to give it to me herself and in her narrative she describes what she does independently.

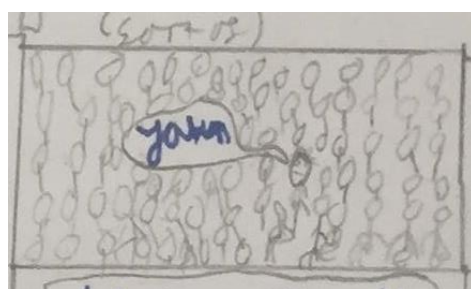
Independence is a theme picked up by others, particularly linked to getting ready for school with Philippe, Esther, Finlay and Ash describing their personal care before school. Ash proposes the idea that school starts too early meaning that he misses breakfast. Within school most children describe their autonomy in organising themselves within the classroom; and Hannah notes Miss Brookes consulting the class on their choice of reward in line with a democratic ethos (Glasser, 1992).

There are three main areas where the children focus on a lack of democracy; Assembly, Break and Food. Assembly raises the most issues, some linked to discomfort of sitting on the floor while teachers either stand or sit on chairs; while others describe the boredom of the adult led assembly with no opportunity for interaction. The children do not seem to enjoy the didactic nature of the assemblies, Harry also communicates dissatisfaction about celebration assemblies, highlighting the

issues as he sees them with children only being acknowledged once a week for working hard and this being limited to two children from each class. Harry feels children should not have to wait and that children should be acknowledged for effort more regularly, more in line with a democratic and Growth Mind-set approach (Dweck, 2017; Glasser, 1992).

He (*Harry*) just went into assemble, and it is not very fun because they could make it more fun because when you are sitting on the cold floor, and he think people should come up to the front more often to be celebrated for what they did not wait until Friday to be congrued

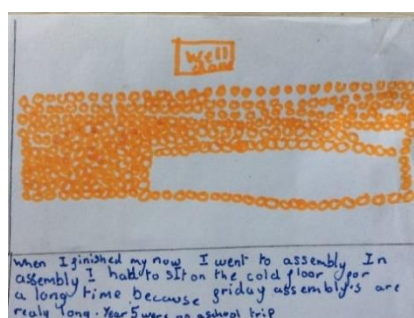
Sam's picture for assembly suggests one face in many, and while the other faces are blank, he has depicted himself yawning displaying his lack of engagement with assembly.



Assembly was explicitly disliked for a number of reasons by 13 children, but many disliked the physical discomfort and noted the authoritarian approach reinforced by teachers sitting on chairs, and adults, generally, delivering the messages at the front to the children sitting quietly on the floor. Rami deems assembly too boring to write about, but he does write that he does not like it. Jack shares his dislike of assembly but is concerned with the boredom and physical discomfort rather than the content.

Walking to assembly, *Jack* don't like assembly's because there too long and he has to sit on the floor.

Poppy also raises this issue due to the length of time and the discomfort of the cold floor. Her picture depicts the discomfort simply and effectively with a space left for year 5 who were on a school trip.



Briony communicates a hatred of the content of assembly. This is interesting, as this is where the school values are explicitly shared. The discomfort may colour Briony's experience, but she describes herself as bored by it.

The lesson where you have to sit on a cold floor and watch and listen to a person talk. And that's what she think of what it equals-boringness. She walked out of the hall feeling a wave of relief and calmness fill her. *Briony*

The only assemblies which were described as enjoyable were those which the children viewed as more collaborative such as the celebration, class and church assemblies where children were invited to participate; Bethany only likes class assemblies which are entirely pupil led more in line with a democratic approach to learning (Dewey, 1966). Kim is keen to commend the head teacher on being a great member of the school, the only child in the year group to do so. Celebration assembly has importance for Kim as she had been given the head teacher's award and this may explain her praise for the head teacher.

Austin describes their class assembly in positive terms, the caption seems to suggest a sense of belonging with the assembly not being like other assemblies, but also a sense of anxiety and relief that it is successful which suggests that he has invested in it, this is in line with other children who prefer assembly when it is child led.

Come on! He's now at assembaly but it's no ordinary assembaly Its theirs! Luckily they have a good one. *Austin*

Break time is highlighted by some as being too short with a limited range of activities; Bethany describes the injustice she feels at not being allowed to read at playtime and Taz notes that break can be taken away by teachers as a punishment. Ronan describes his pleasure at being allowed to sit inside at lunchtime, a situation he negotiated with Miss Lawrence. Many children describe their enjoyment of break times due to being able to relax and choose (to some extent) their activities resulting in a feeling of autonomy. Harry, Jamilah and Poppy all convey the wish for more choice of activities and a wider range of equipment. Harry suggests that playtime should be longer as it goes too quickly. He would like playtimes to be better resourced with various balls and climbing equipment and the option of using the field more often. He balances this with constructive ideas for improvement. His ideas seem to promote a more democratic approach where children are given more choice and autonomy in the school day (Dewey, 1966; Glasser, 1986).



Food, in particular school lunch, is another area where some children feel they have little choice and autonomy. Harry would like more autonomy with lunch which he feels children should be able to choose for themselves rather than pre-filled lunch bags while Bethany hates having to eat lunch in the dirty school hall. Poppy reports that she would like a variation in lunchtime choices.

For Rami, religion is presented as a negative experience at school, from the lack of Halal food (which contravenes UNCRC Articles 14 and 30, 1989) to assembly which is too boring to consider, this may be because he feels that the pluralistic nature of the school community is not acknowledged (Halstead and Taylor, 1996).

Lunch. he don't like it. Lunchtime is sometimes not halal wich makes me angry so I have to eat the God stuff. *Rami*

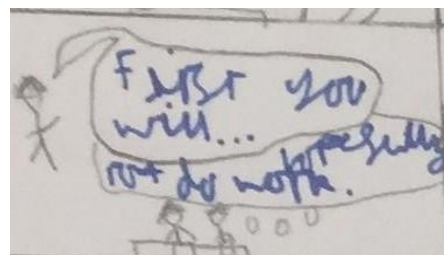
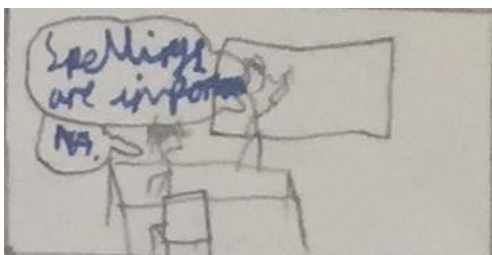
In his Self-Characterisation Seamus chose to skip subjects he felt were boring, but acknowledged them so I knew he was skipping them.

Now what's next? Ugh math! Wait yes! I'm missing math and going to rocksteady! *Seamus*

Seamus's Self-Characterisation demonstrates a quiet subversiveness, missing maths to go to rock steady and play drums which he loves and omitting lessons which he finds boring; the Self-Characterisation process appeared to give Seamus the opportunity for autonomy and freedom to share things of importance to him and to omit those things he didn't (Bannister and Fransella, 1986).

Joe presents himself working very hard throughout the day and seems to highlight a lack of autonomy, with his actions being dictated by his parents, his teacher and the bell (Glasser, 1992). This seems to represent the reality of Joe's day at school and may suggest a need for more space in the day and times when the children have more choice as noted in Seb, Harry and Ash's Self-Characterisations (Glasser, 1992).

Sam appears to have used the Self-Characterisation to communicate his disengagement with his teacher and the curriculum; his thoughts seem to allow him to disagree with his teacher, even if only in his head as illustrated when he disagrees with the teacher's values about spellings.



The lessons Sam describes demonstrate a didactic approach with little agency, resulting in a lack of engagement (Glasser, 1986).

The need for autonomy (Dewey, 1966) is echoed in Ash's love for Art. This is reflected in the success he feels at the work produced compared to the other lessons, and also in the way he applied himself to the Self-Characterisation which was self-directed.

Art was his favourite lesson as he (*Ash*) got to do what he wanted to do. But it had to do with the topic of his lesson. This lesson he drew a traditional Greek myth pot and the teacher thought it was beautiful. We could sit with our friends if we wanted to.

Poppy dislikes editing her work and prefers work where she has an element of challenge or more Socratic approach with the freedom to research America and working out perimeter in maths (Dewey, 1966). Jamilah notes times in the day where she lacks agency.

Then she groaned because she didn't like assemblys and she thought they needed to make it a bit more fun. So far she was enjoying the day except when it was assembly. As they were sitting down in assembly she was daydreaming because of how boring assembly was. Miss Brooke's group had to line up to go to her class so they can do their spellings and she didn't enjoy spellings a lot because it was as boring as assembly was. *Jamilah* didn't like playtimes a lot because they weren't allowed to stay inside.

Ashley enjoys subverting expectations which appears to suggest independence and autonomy (Dewey, 1966; Glasser, 1992). He demonstrates small rebellions in a number of quiet ways by not getting up, going into his mum and dad's room, not having to go to assembly and sleeping in PSHE.

Gradually he walked into his mum and dads room and went back to sleep in there so his mum and dad don't tell him of. Today *Ashley* didn't have to go to assembly which was good because they always bore him. Then it was boring PSHE.



Ronan twice mentions being in class by himself, his teacher lets him do this sometimes because he likes to have time away from the other children but in class and in the playground he appears to have friends and to be sociable; this suggests that Ronan's needs are being met and his contributions and wishes are being acknowledged.

that he went to his class and he eat his breakfast before anyone eles can get to And lunch time it is really relaxing because no one can desturp him and no one can get into class so it is chilld free. *Ronan*

Briony describes a didactic teaching approach which does not appeal to her preferred way of learning, suggesting a preference for a more democratic approach (Dewey, 1966).

More evidence of the Briony's dislike of didactic approaches is evident in the afternoon; the boredom with waiting hinders Briony's coping strategy of trying to get through the day quickly.

As Miss Lawrence spoke, *Briony* fiddled with her hair, bored of waiting. Miss Lawrence finally announced that we were doing art

Sam disagrees with his teacher's ideas about learning, but does not feel able to express this to her verbally while Soraya delights in 'no-listening time'. The children seem able to communicate wishes for more autonomy and democracy clearly in the Self-Characterisations and there are times when these desires are met.

Throughout the Self-Characterisations there appears to be a desire for autonomy, consultation and more focus on self-directed tasks. Rami uses the Self-Characterisation to communicate his frustrations at the government for making the work too hard. Seb describes an exciting (imaginary) science lesson which is curtailed by an adult, and starts the day with a reluctance to get up and go to school with the adult demonstrating intransigence with her hands on her hips. Seb expresses a wish for independence in his learning throughout the process (Dewey, 1966).

### High Expectations

Nevertheless, instead of listening to those who advise us as men and mortals not to lift our thoughts above what is human and mortal, we ought rather, as far as possible, to put off our mortality and make every effort to live in the exercise of the highest of our faculties; for though it be but a small part of us, yet in power and value it far surpasses all the rest. (Aristotle, 2014:340)

Aristotle (2014) presents the importance of having high expectations for ourselves, a notion reflected by the participants. Many of the children appear to demonstrate *High Expectations* for themselves, particularly with regard to their academic work, however they demonstrate honesty and self-awareness about their own abilities and things they found challenging. This is exemplified by Jack; while he shares his successes, he is equally happy to share things he dislikes or finds difficult.

In maths *Jack* have done pirimiter and the sheet that he was on was hard and he didn't finish it.

It appears important to Jack for the reader to acknowledge the things he is good at and his part in the success of teams he is involved with. The balance with the rest of his Self-Characterisation seems to present a self-knowledge and self-awareness. He describes persevering with things he finds difficult, suggesting a resilient approach to school. Seamus, Ronan and Soraya have *High Expectations* for themselves, Seamus highlighting his lack of good shots in rounders and Ronan when describing his experiences in maths. Soraya's *High Expectations* seem to veer towards negativity, however she also notes when she achieves her goals.

A number of children communicate anxieties about the spelling test. Austin demonstrates self-awareness throughout his Self-Characterisation, acknowledging things he doesn't enjoy and his dislike of writing; despite this, Austin's Self-Characterisation uses language in a creative and evocative way suggesting that he maintains *High Expectations* for himself even in subjects he dislikes.

Many children describe enjoyment at learning new skills, coping with and enjoying challenge (Henderson and Milstein, 2003), whether this be in Rocksteady or in Tenor horn and Ukulele lessons. Taz describes his excitement at PE and Rocksteady; identifying the opportunity to learn new skills (Henderson and Milstein, 2003). He does not state whether he is good at these subjects, therefore his enjoyment of these subjects seems unconditional and demonstrates engagement with learning. Poppy describes enjoying not knowing the answer in maths suggesting a resilient, Growth Mind-set approach (Dweck, 2017) and she also mentions enjoying the challenge of rounders.

<p>I like perimeter a lot because I think its fun not knowing the answer. After lunch we did P.E. we did Rounders I love rounders because I love running in a time limit. <i>Poppy</i></p>
--

Josiah uses the Self-Characterisation to show that he is a good learner and good at football and tennis. He sometimes gets frustrated with his learning, but he has chosen not to depict this; it appears important that he lets the reader know that he is able to do things. The maths problems which he describes were something we worked on the previous week and he found very difficult and frustrating. Rami recognises that some subjects are tricky, particularly English but he acknowledges that maths is hard for some people and easy for others and meets the challenge of learning new things.

Noah describes handing out the books for English and Maths which 'was hard because they were really heavy', thus highlighting that there are *High Expectations* for him in helping his mother, who

was the class TA, prepare the classroom before school in addition to the expectations on the other children.

The Self-Characterisation may have been easier for Ephren if he had dictated it, but he is proud and hates feeling he can't do things. He states that he hates school but counters it with talking positively about Miss Lawrence. The theme which comes through in Ephren's writing is that school makes him feel unsuccessful 'Don't you feel sorry for me I hate school'. His illustrations show him crying or sad, something which he would not necessarily communicate with his classmates but was able to share in his Self-Characterisation.

Francesca demonstrates *High Expectations* set by herself and her teacher when she describes challenging spellings, but the success she reports seems to suggest that these are realistic expectations.

After that, we did spellings. *Francesca's* spellings were really hard! After she did english. *Francesca* checked her work perfectly and put one smiley face on the rocket. The english was really easy but still a but hard!

Jack's dislike of editing may suggest a lack of resilience, but also demonstrates *High Expectations* for him set by his teacher, demonstrating ways of improving his work.

Seeing the school gates *Jack* says in his head "this is going to be a long day of work". When he gets into school it says on the board "check your writing and maths books for any NOWS or pinks. Which *Jack* don't like to do.

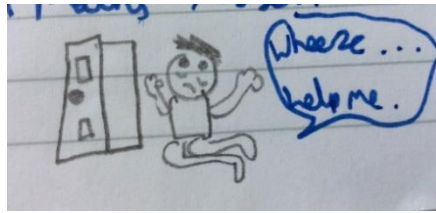
It appears important to Majed to gain recognition for his achievements, citing success in the Celebration assembly and gaining 12/12 spellings score.

While going to assembly he (*Majed*) wanted to get nominated that he actually got nominated for Well done assembly he was very proud of himself. He was nervous to get a 1/12 score but he wanted to get a full score which is 12/12 and he got what he wanted.

Harry presents the dilemma of enjoying maths but finding it hard, this seems to suggest that he experiences enough challenge to keep him interested, but not so much that he becomes disengaged; the use of the word 'sometimes' suggest that he holds a growth mind-set approach to his work (Dweck, 2017).

He (*Harry*) like maths it is fun but some time it is very hard and he can not understand what Miss Lawrence is doing so he gets lost in maths and does not understand what she saying/talking about.

Joe appears not to struggle with the work, but in his Self-Characterisation he describes 'surviving' English and 'nearly dying' from maths which may suggest he feels the expectations held for him are unreasonable.



Despite being asked to include their feelings and opinions about school, Serena has only done this at the beginning "Yay" and when describing division as the hardest thing ever. She took the Self-Characterisation home as she wanted to work on it, demonstrating a conscientious attitude to her work and self-motivation as there was no requirement to complete the Self-Characterisations. This may suggest that the activity was important to her and that she held *High Expectations* for herself, completing it to a standard she was happy with.

April's statements suggest an engagement with and enjoyment of challenge, both in maths and at playtime.

"I love maths" April said.

At break time April played with Kim, they played on the poles then on the mushrooms doing arabesques and seeing who could stand on one leg the longest

There is a distinct optimism about Vicky's attitude towards her school experience, which seems to be grounded in her positive experiences and *High Expectations* of school which is a key indicator of resilience (Grotberg, 1995).

Finlay reflects positively on an upcoming test, but recognises the link between concentration and hard work to achieve the grade he wants, demonstrating a resilient, Growth Mind-set (Dweck, 2017).

Also a lot of nervs where because It was Friday... also Finlay was a test today!

As we left the assembly Finlay instantly rememberd he had a test so Finlay put his thinking brain on and started the test after he got answers and Finlay saw he had 30/30 It was amazing Finlay jumpt up in down Finlay had got full marks.

Having got full marks Finlay got a prize and carried on with his brilliant day

Finlay's Self-Characterisation seems to be imbued with joyfulness about his school experience and it is arguably this value which has enabled him to succeed socially and academically. This optimistic attitude is considered to be an essential component of resilience (Grotberg, 1995).

Philippe displays and communicates a resilient nature when he falls over while playing tennis, carrying on despite his injury.

Jamilah communicates dislike of a number of areas which seems to be linked to a lack of challenge; she finds assembly boring (not engaging), spellings boring and maths too easy. The Self-Characterisation may have been an opportunity for Jamilah to convey her dissatisfaction at the lack of challenge which can lead to disengagement (Henderson and Milstein, 2003).

Then she groaned because she didn't like assemblys and she thought they needed to make it a bit more fun. So far she was enjoying the day except when it was assembly. As they were sitting down in assembly she was daydreaming because of how boring assembly was. Miss Brooke's group had to line up to go to her class so they can do their spellings and she didn't enjoy spellings a lot because it was as boring as assembly was. *Jamilah* didn't like playtimes a lot because they weren't allowed to stay inside.

In contrast, when Sam describes maths as boring to his friends, this seems to mask anxiety around maths rather than finding it too easy; he hopes that he will not have maths, suggesting that he does not expect to achieve in maths.

Bethany displays a resilient attitude to her learning, coping with change of instrument, reporting strategies to help her with division. Learning new things seems of importance and her resilient approach appears to encourage a pragmatic and adaptable attitude to learning new skills which could also suggest a growth mind-set (Dweck, 2017).

NOOO" *Bethany* though, she hatted division but that day she seemed to get the hang of it, first she got taught how to do the bus stop method wich helped A LOT. In ucalaylie we lerned a c minor and an A major.

Ashley comments that he always finds maths easy which may suggest that he needs more challenge, also supported by his negative descriptions of things as boring or annoying. In contrast he describes the music sessions with which he fully engages and finds fun, both of which involved him learning a new instrument (Dweck, 2017).

The first lesson was maths which *Ashley* always finds easy. Then *Ashley* got called for rock steady which he found really fun Because of rock steady *Ashley* missed break but came in just in time for ukelele. Which was very fun

Ronan is keen to mention how good he is at English possibly to counteract the maths which I had supported him with and which he found hard and frustrating. However, he describes his persistence and resilience in English lessons, this contrasts with both maths and PE which he dislikes as he does not like getting hurt.

when it was a math session he always had struggled with it and then he always complains about everything and when it is English he is he is very knowledgeable and he doesn't get a single word wrong and he never ever complain saying I gave up on he just keeps on doing it even if it's hard and in spellings he is very knowledgeable and he doesn't even have a problem with it and sometimes plays spelling games with them and all of them love doing spellings with him a lot.  
When it is PE it is too hard for him and he can not do it because he is not much of a sporty person he doesn't like to get hurt or anything. *Ronan*

Soraya seems to enjoy English as she feels she is good at it, but is more anxious about maths; she has *High Expectations* for her spelling test, her success suggests that this is realistic. Her desire to pass the test may suggest a fixed mind-set approach, as does her description of herself as a great storyteller (Dweck, 2017).

*Soraya* thought "I love spellings so I'll definitely pass the test" then it was spellings and she did what she wanted to pass. As time passed by, it was time to write a story and she thought "I'm a great story teller so this will be easy."

Many of the children highlight a need for and a love of challenge which links to *High Expectations*, however some indicate that these are sometimes inappropriately set with either not enough challenge resulting in boredom, or in too much resulting in a feeling of failure. While some children such as Poppy and Ashley illustrate enjoyment at learning new skills, others indicate frustration such as Ronan and Briony who perhaps are communicating the need for more careful scaffolding in their learning in order to achieve the expectations set by their teacher and by themselves (Mercer, 2018).

### Life skills

Then against such chances the children must be at once furnished with wings, in order that in the hour of need they may fly away and escape. (Plato, 2013:326)

Plato (2013) acknowledges the importance of building independence in our children; this is an issue highlighted by the participants in the study. Henderson and Milstein (2003) regard making good choices, conflict resolution, assertiveness and impulse control as part of *Life Skills*. This aligns with Citizenship education which also asserts that respect, helpfulness and kindness are part of these *Life Skills* to be developed and are modelled rather than explicitly taught (Kohn, 1997; AGC, 1998).



The complexities of friendship are raised by some, further demonstrating dealing with conflict. Hannah describes her feelings at lunchtime when she feels left out and Taz notes consequences of Finlay being 'hyper' and having to miss five minutes of his lunch.

Co-operation and helpfulness are key *Life Skills* noted by Serena; she describes how I helped her in maths and how she helps the class teacher at lunchtime.

In maths we were learning about division the hardest thing in my life I got some help from Miss Martin then I understood about division  
After the dinner I went upstairs and went to my class and asked Miss Lawrence If there any jobs she said yes, she said you can sharp the pencil. *Serena*

Kindness and helpfulness also appear to be of importance to April as she describes helping Laura in maths; it may also be that she desires recognition for her actions. Jamilah describes an enactment of kindness when she describes herself holding the door open for others. Many of the children describe or depict collaborative working which may be part of *Meaningful Participation*, but are also important life skills which may be positively developed by the school environment (Dewey, 1975). Hannah draws children working together and describes the way her class teacher involves the class in decision making which also emphasises the sense of belonging.

A number of children identify independence in learning (referred to in the *Meaningful Participation* section); Seamus, Ash, Francesca and Vicky describe independent learning experiences while Philippe describes independence at home with no adult input. Personal responsibility is identified as one of the essential ingredients in Citizenship Education (Westheimer, 2015).

Austin describes experiential learning and awe and wonder on entering his classroom seeing that chicks had hatched, describing how the mundanity of the morning routine had been broken (Adams *et al*, 2008). The chicks represent a real life learning experience and a more democratic approach to learning which he appears to value (Dewey, 1966).

Now, he's (*Austin*) here at school still with the monday moan with his bag on is back he waddled into class still frowning to find everybody huddled up towards the radiator oh he had forgotten the chicks are here such a wonderful surprise.

The notion of respect is raised by Rami, as highlighted by the Halal food incident and being pushed over (UNGA, 1989) He communicates his sadness at getting pushed over at playtime, accompanying the writing with a picture where everyone else appears to be stood smiling while he lies on the floor. Despite this, he says that he has fun at lunchtime as it is longer than playtime which suggests he is

using coping strategies which build resilience and *Life Skills*. He draws himself playing respectfully and collaboratively with others. Naveen demonstrates a respectful and compassionate approach towards others throughout his Self-Characterisation (UNGA, 1989).

The participants identify a number of instances where *Life Skills* are developed during the school day, both as part of planned activities such as collaborative working, but seem to highlight in this section the hidden curriculum aspect of teaching *Life Skills* through ethos and role modelling rather than through explicitly taught lessons. Rami's identification of a lack of respect for his culture and religious beliefs does this in a negative way while the examples of kindness and helpfulness identified by others do this in a positive way. The fact that there are less explicit examples of this in the children's Self-Characterisations may be due to the implicit nature of modelling and the creation of a learning environment which provides opportunities to practice *Life Skills*. Role modelling is widely regarded as the most influential way of developing values in children through a values clarification model rather than a values transmission model (Carr, 1997; Halstead and Taylor, 2000).

### Resilience

When children are provided with conditions which support the six protective factors, they will become resilient learners and members of the school community (Henderson and Milstein, 2003).

The children provide examples of resilience throughout the school day; Rami describes coping with the 'mess' at home time and challenging work. Harry describes how he copes with the frustrations he feels with some aspects of school life. Naveen notes subjects he finds challenging and acknowledges differing opinions. Kelli describes managing to cope despite not being a morning person and coping with disappointment at never getting a good pen.

Bethany describes the way she copes with elements of the school day she dislikes.

She (*Bethany*) thought how lucky shee was to not be in the dinner hall. She preffered being outside because the floor wasn't cacked in left over food.

Jack identifies his enjoyment of rounders despite no-one throwing the ball to him, while Jamilah describes coping with things that she doesn't like (Duckworth, 2018).

In PE we was playing rounders which is my 3<sup>rd</sup> favorite sport. I did hit the ball the furthest and I done a full rounder. Then we swaped over and *Jack* was a fielder. No-one passed to him but he didn't care because he had fun. After PE is over *Jack* got changed for the end of the day.

As they were sitting down in assembly she (*Jamilah*) was daydreaming because of how boring assembly was

Briony has constructed a strategy to make the day go quicker which ameliorates the school experience. She shows anxiety around not knowing the day's plans.

*Briony* wanted to stay at home but knew she had to go to school, so from then she decided that she would rush through the whole school day so she wouldn't have to go through the pain. [...] After the fun 15 minutes of playtime, the whole class went up to do another lesson. *Briony* hates that they don't know what they are doing.

It is important to Briony that she is good at perimeter and thus able to calm down. This could suggest an anxiety, not necessarily about maths but about being unsuccessful, something which high achieving pupils often experience (Dweck, 2017). Briony enjoys art as she is good at the task of designing Greek pots and completes it quickly.

While some of Briony's attitudes about her lessons may indicate a lack of resilience due to the unrealistic expectations she holds for herself; she has developed strategies to get through the day, that of doing things quickly which may suggest resilience and coping strategies.

Naveen describes a resilient attitude throughout his Self-Characterisation, coping when he finds things hard and still enjoying them (Grotberg, 1995).

*Naveen* does not like English but still completets it with no complain.  
*Naveen* played rounders. *Naveen* found it hard but had a lot of fun

Austin shows resilience and persistence when his cakes initially fail to sell (Grotberg, 1995; Henderson and Milstein, 2003).

Sadly his cakes wernt selling well So he (*Austin*) walked around and they sold quickly so he went around again and again until he had the last cakes he could have all of them but someone finally bought them!

Soraya seems to be a fairly resilient learner, despite her anxieties about work she listens and describes herself having a go and things not being as bad as she had thought

The participants present a number of examples of their resilience and persistence, both in their attitude to work and in managing conflict and disappointment. Some, such as Ephren portray a lack

she knew it was English next she thought "Yes my favourite subject". After she knew it was nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs she thought "I don't know the differences between adverbs and verbs" but as Miss Lawrence wasn't ambiguous it was pretty clear. "Now it is math my hardest subject" then when she got into class and did the date and margin Miss Lawrence handed her the sheet she thought "This doesn't look hard at all" *Soraya* thought "I love spellings so I'll definitely pass the test" then it was spellings and she did what she wanted to pass. As time passed by, it was time to write a story and she thought "I'm a great story teller so this will be easy.

of resilience when describing their frustrations, but these seem to be linked to learning, suggesting that the children require more scaffolding in their learning to meet the *High Expectations* held for them and by them. Their presentation of their dissatisfaction at some of the areas in school where they feel a lack of opportunities for *Meaningful Participation* may suggest Resilience and confidence in the belief that their ideas will be listened to (Glasser, 1992). With *Care and Support* as the foundation of resilience, it seems important to investigate further those children who fail to identify any aspects of this protective factor and the classroom and school practices which may be supporting this. There seemed to be a consensus among the participants that the classroom structure and routines enabled the children to feel safe and that *Clear, Consistent Boundaries* were in place. There were crossovers between *Pro-Social Bonding* and *Life Skills* where the majority of the participants described positive *Relationships* with others and also ways of managing *Relationships* (Henderson and Milstein, 2003).

### Evidence of the School Values

**Love:** *Because God **loves** us, we have a responsibility to love each other, to love God's world and everything in it.*

**Honesty:** *is about speaking the truth to each other in love and even if we are in the wrong being able to admit that we have made a mistake. We believe in the importance of saying sorry.*

**Hope:** *is another word for faith and this faith comes from our belief in God*

**Forgiveness:** *Because God has **forgiven** us, we do all we can to forgive others when they have hurt us or caused us upset.*

It could be said that some aspects of *Caring and Support* could be applied to the school value of Love. However, the children's descriptions of *Relationships* make no links to God or his world apart from Soraya using playtime to enjoy nature. There is no sense of responsibility to love each other as stated in the school value of Love; the *Care and Support* seems to be as a result of mutual respect and unconditional positive regard rather than borne from a sense of duty. The emphasis from Henderson and Milstein (2003) is on the *Care and Support* being provided by the school staff in order to build resilience; the participants also identified this as being provided by parents and also from them towards others, such as with Ash and Kieran. While friendships and positive interactions are mentioned explicitly throughout the Self-Characterisations, the word love is only used as a preference by the children, such as Vicky loving art. Although the children's description of friendships could fit with the secular definition of love, it does not align with the school definition.

The children shared their honest opinions in the Self-Characterisations, because they were explicitly asked to do so, rather than enactments of the school values. The discussions at the start of the sessions with both classes about honesty and confidentiality appeared to give all children the opportunity to share their honest experiences about school, including, but not confined to, admitting when they had done something wrong which may suggest that their honesty was a result of a direct invitation and as the result of autonomous rather than heteronomous morality (Piaget, 1997). This presents conflict for Jamilah when thinking about playtime; she describes rushing to go outside into the fresh air, but follows this with her dislike of playtime. The rushing into the fresh air seems to display compliance. The following sentence conveys her real feelings which may be Jamilah struggling with pleasing the reader by presenting an idealistic version of school and being honest which was a prerequisite of the Self-Characterisation (Hill, 2005).

None of the children used the school definition of Hope. This could again suggest that the children have developed their values through a values clarification model and autonomous morality rather than through an extrinsically imposed value (Halstead and Taylor, 1996; Piaget, 1997).

Forgiveness does not feature largely in the children's Self-Characterisations; rather they are a result of the *Relationships* the children have built with staff and other children and the desire to maintain these *Relationships*, rather than 'because God has forgiven them'. Where forgiveness is demonstrated, it seems to be informed by the relationship with the other person; Ash, Jack, Saffron and Briony forgive their friends in order to maintain their friendships. Ash forgives his teacher for being cross as it means that he can spend uninterrupted time with her. Naveen recognises that others behave differently to him so is able to forgive them for this. Seb and Rami do not have *Relationships* with the head-teacher or lunchtime staff so are less able to forgive their perceived failings. The children are developing their own moral codes through their *Relationships* and experiences rather than as a result of the extrinsically imposed codes of behaviour (Kant, 2001).

### Summary

The way that the children responded to the Self-Characterisation demonstrates a self-determination and an assertiveness in communicating their experiences and things they would like changed. They enjoyed the process of the Self-Characterisation as evidenced by all choosing to participate with some children taking it home to complete. The Self-Characterisation offered the children the opportunity to share their thoughts and to take part in something they knew would be shared with their teachers and leadership team, as well as being disseminated more widely. They all seemed to approach the task with a sense of responsibility that their opinions were valid and valued, offering an opportunity for *Meaningful Participation*. The notion that it is considered that children are unable

to complete Self-Characterisations due to the complexity of the task has been challenged by their responses; they responded to the *High Expectations* set for them (Fransella and Bannister, 1977).

While the Self-Characterisations provided a wealth of information about the children's experiences at school, I wanted to find a way to gain their perceptions and beliefs about the school values so created a group interview using PCT techniques to elicit their constructs about the four school values.

### Values Group Work

The group work had thirty-three of children involved with thirteen participating in more than one session. The work started with six children, all of whom were free to go at any time, and as they went others joined the group. The activity ran over two afternoons during which time some children engaged more than once and some stayed for the entire session. Formalising the groups would have changed the activity and may have led to less engagement as some children may have avoided the commitment of staying for the entire session.

The values group work focused specifically on the four values of Love, Honesty, Hope and Forgiveness, exploring the children's personal range of convenience (Kelly, 1991). Using a dyadic, rather than triadic procedure constructs were elicited in order to make the process as inclusive and accessible as possible (Salmon, 1976). The children constructed their own definition of each of the values and then identified what its opposite would be, provided alongside examples of when they had seen the values and the opposite in school.

Under each value the constructs are grouped into similar ideas raised by the children as seen in the table below.

Love	Honesty	Hope	Forgiveness
Friendship v bullying	Honesty v lying to get out of trouble	Hope for possessions v not hoping	Forgiveness v opposite of sorry
Love v hate	Honesty v lying to present a preferable sense of self	Hope for recovering from illness v believing in yourself	Admitting fault to friends v not forgiving
Love v Ignorance	Honesty v lying to a friend	Hope for getting your own way v giving up	Looking after people v saying sorry
	Honesty v stealing	Achieving success in school v not believing in self	Unconditional forgiveness v not feeling ready to forgive

Figure 4 The children's constructs about the school values

The session started with a discussion about the value and the school value definition, emphasising that they may have their own individual interpretations of the value. The children wrote their definitions and accompanied this with a picture of an example of when they had seen the value enacted in school. Following this we discussed their ideas about what the opposite of the value was and they followed the same process, defining the opposite of the value and providing an example of an enactment of the opposite of the value according to their definitions. The children looked for similarities and themes in their constructs and I checked with them that I had understood them correctly throughout the process.

### Love

Participants' understanding of the value Love, identified three main constructs:

- Friendship v Bullying (Figure 5)
- Love v Hate (Figure 6)
- Love v Ignorance (Figure 7)

Within each of these three themes the children's idiosyncratic views are represented by using their original work and the presentation of language has been unchanged from their work.

Construct	Opposite
<p><b>TAZ</b> Love means to me respect and friendship because if your friend hurts themselves it's not kind to leave them.</p>	<p>Hate is the opposite of love and it is the same as bullying. Bullying Stop!</p>
<p><b>SAFFRON</b> Love. genorous. Caring. Kind.</p>	<p>Bulling.</p>

<p><b>LAURA</b> Respect. LOVE. if you friend falls over you can help them.</p>	<p>Bullying. Telling of people. Repeting words all over again. People push other people. Slapping</p>
<p><b>AUSTIN</b> LOVE It means caring for each other even if you're not friends.</p>	<p>I think the opposite of love is BULLYING.</p>
<p><b>KIM</b> Love. Caring for other people. Helping. Generosity. Looking after people.</p>	<p>Not loving. Not caring for other people. Not being generous. Not looking after people. Not helping.</p>

Figure 5 Definitions of love and the opposite bullying

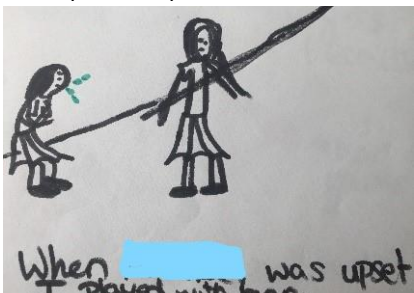
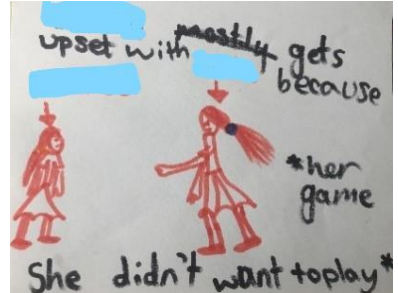
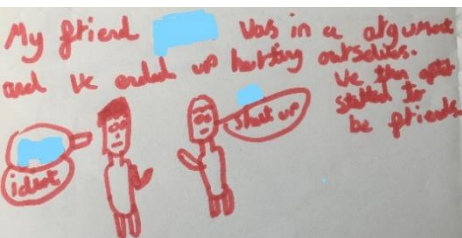
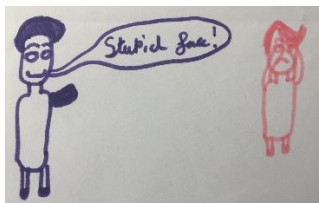

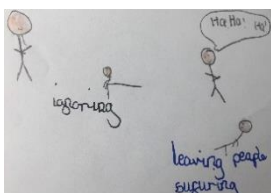
Even within these seemingly similar definitions in Table 5.3, there are individual interpretations. Taz and Saffron include the forgiving nature of love, repairing friendships as an act of love and its opposite as bullying defined as the lack of reparation. Austin perceives love as something which you should feel for everyone, not just those who are friends. Saffron and Austin link the idea of love with helping others, particularly when they are hurt. Similarly, Kim views Love as something epitomised by helping people who are hurt, and views the opposite as an absence of love, not noticing or choosing not to notice others in pain. *Relationships* and conflict resolution are key aspects of values



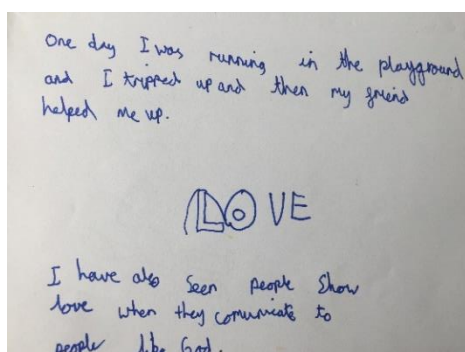
education (Arthur, 2005), which also align with the Fundamental British Values (FBV) of Mutual Respect and Tolerance (DfE, 2014a). These participants raise the issue of tolerance and respect in the context of their *Relationships* with their peers, however the children do not limit these issues to faith and beliefs, unlike FBV, but suggest that tolerance and respect should underpin all *Relationships*.

Henderson and Milstein (2003) identify *Care and Support*, *Pro-Social bonding* and *Life Skills* as key areas of resilience; these three areas are identified by the children in their definitions. Saffron, Austin and Kim identify caring for and helping others as a key indicator of Love. Saffron, Taz and Laura highlight the issues that may arise with friendships or as a result of *Pro-Social bonding*, but also provide examples of *Life Skills*, dealing with conflicts with friends.

In Figure 6, Vicky, Taz, Hannah and Ronan all view the opposite of love as some form of Hate, all with slightly different examples and perceptions of the concepts.

<p><b>VICKY</b> Love to me is when your friend needs help, you show friendship and help them.</p>  <p>When [redacted] was upset I played with her.</p>	<p>I think the opposite to LOVE is HATERED.</p>  <p>upset with [redacted] mostly gets because she didn't want to play *her game</p>
<p><b>TAZ</b> Love means to me respect and friendship because if your friend hurts themselves it's not kind to leave them.</p>  <p>My friend [redacted] was in a argument and we ended up hurting ourselves. We then got stuck to be friends</p>	<p>Hate is the opposite of love and it is the same as bullying. Bullying Stop!</p>  <p>Stupid! Gee!</p>
<p><b>HANNAH</b> Mind map with <i>love</i> in the centre and the words <i>huging</i>, <i>caring for others</i>, <i>gentle</i> and <i>kind</i>.</p>  <p>caring for others hugging</p>	<p>Mind map with <i>Haterie</i> in the centre, with the words <i>brute</i>, <i>rude</i>, <i>leaving people sufuring</i>, <i>unking</i>, <i>ignoring</i>.</p>  <p>leaving people sufuring unking ignoring</p>

**RONAN LOVE.** Caring for others. Looking after people. Helping people.



**Hatred.**

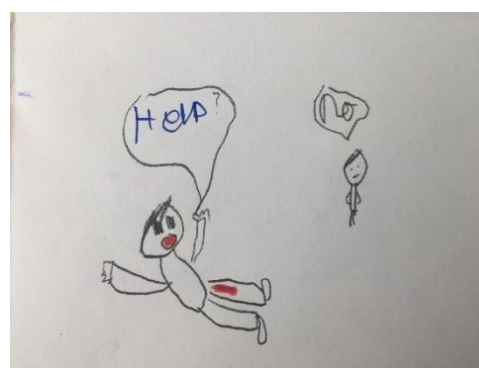
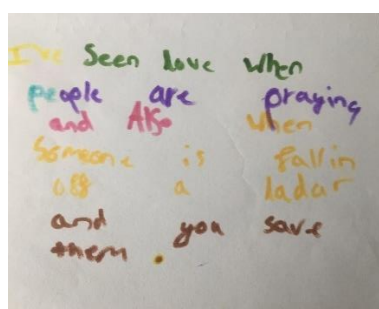


Figure 6 Examples of Love with Hate as its opposite

Vicky and Taz are concerned with friendships, possibly with the opposite hate being from a friend, someone who they had previously loved, thus linking the two. Ronan develops this point with the friend helping, and presents the opposite as someone refusing to help. Ronan is one of two who mentions love as being linked to communication with God. Hannah seems to present love enacted by caring for younger children with the opposite enacted by ignoring suffering in others, so an absence of action.

This sub-theme again identifies the issues of *Respect, Friendship, Conflict Resolution* and *Care and Support*. These themes align with Henderson and Milstein (2003), particularly with caring for and helping others, with the manifestation of the opposite defined as hatred demonstrating a lack of care for others by upsetting others and leaving them when they need help. Mutual respect is highlighted in FBV (DfE, 2014a), and links to a Rights Respecting agenda (Struthers, 2016).

**PHILIPPE Love.** Caring. Looking after people.



**Ignorance.**



Figure 7 Example of Love with ignorance as its opposite

In Figure 7, Philippe describes the opposite of Love as Ignorance, potentially linked to faith as it mentions praying, however, using the opposite illustration, ignorance seems to be people ignoring each other. It is interesting that Philippe identifies an enactment of Love as saving someone from falling off a ladder, not something which he had witnessed at school.

While Philippe and Ronan mention praying and communication with God in line with the school value of Love, the majority of the constructs do not align with the school definition of Love, and are particularly concerned with peer friendships and the complexities of those *Relationships*. Some see the opposite of Love as unkind actions or words, while others note the lack of care for others as the opposite of Love.

The participants seem to view Respect as an element of Love in line with the Rights Respecting Agenda and FBV (UNGA, 1989; DfE, 2014a). Looking after each other and friendship feature in a number of the children's definitions in line with Henderson and Milstein (2003). The importance of Citizenship and getting along with each other features strongly in this section and seems to be a key area of Love for the participants, an area highlighted by (Suissa, 2015).

### **Honesty**

The school value of Honesty identifies truthfulness as a key component, however the school's interpretation of this links honesty to apologising and speaking the truth in love. These additions seem to complicate the seemingly simple concept of honesty with the children. The simplicity may be reflected by all the participants identifying Lying as the opposite of Honesty. However, there were a range of examples and interpretations of this. There were two main thematic constructs; Honesty v Lying and Honesty v Stealing, however I identified three distinct themes within lying with different purposes:

- Lying to get out of trouble (Figures 8, 9 and 10)
- Lying to present a preferable sense of self (Figure 11)
- Lying to a friend (Figures 12 and 13)

Thus I have analysed the children's thoughts against these three themes.

Taz raised an issue of dishonesty which had occurred with a member of his year group and which he was clearly still angry about. On further discussion, the incident, which may have appeared minor to his class teacher, had happened over two years previously, but still provoked intense emotion in him (Chiari, 2013).

<p><b>TAZ:</b> <i>Honesty is all about confessing to something you did. If you have done something wrong and you lie its more better to tell the truth.</i></p>	<p><i>Lying.</i></p>
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Figure 8: Example of Honesty with Lying as it's opposite

Taz is keen to exemplify himself in the definition of honesty, in line with the school value of admitting he made a mistake. The second picture, while still concerned with lying, exemplifies a child who did not admit his mistake.

Finlay had a similarly emotional response when discussing Honesty, but the incident had occurred two hours prior to our session.

<p><b>FINLAY</b> <i>Honesty means that you tell the truth because it shows that your not lying you are telling the truth. I have never seen the truth.</i></p>	<p><i>Unhonest means that you don't teel the truth and you don't get in trouble and that stand for. There year 6 person is never honesty I got in trouble when I did.</i></p>
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Figure 9: Example of Honesty with Unhonest as its opposite

Finlay had been reprimanded in assembly for talking by another teacher. Finlay was not talking, it was a year six child behind him, so he attempted to defend himself, resulting in further admonishment; he highlights the unfairness of the situation, the boy who lied was exonerated and Finlay was punished. He saw this as an example of when the values were used inaccurately by a teacher, and raises the idea of a power imbalance where the teacher's judgement overrides the reality of the situation, possibly suggesting to Finlay that Honesty is not a value which teachers respect. This reinforces the importance of role modelling in the development of values (Carr, 1997; Halstead and Taylor, 2000).

Lying to keep out of trouble is a theme which seems to be integrally linked with fairness and not part of the school definition.



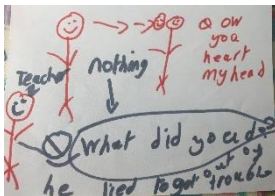
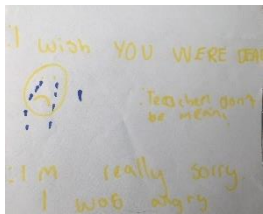
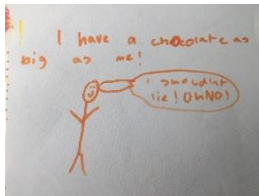
<p><b>SAM</b> To me honesty means showing your wrongs and right as you should.</p> 	<p>The opposite of honesty is lying.</p> 
<p><b>RAMI</b> Honesty when I tell the truth if I stole something or I was the main problem.</p>	<p>Lies. Someone that did something wrong and lied to get out of trouble.</p> 

Figure 10: Examples of Honesty with Lying to get out of trouble as it's opposite

Both Sam and Rami's examples are concerned with people getting away with things through lying raising a feeling of unfairness. This presents Honesty as a problematic concept as qualified by Sam's statement 'showing your wrongs and right as you should' and Rami's assertion that the truth must be told if 'I was the main problem'. However, the children's responses suggest that there is a simplified approach to the values and little discussion about how the complexities of keeping them. These constructs demonstrate an integrity but frustration with those who are seen to get away with misdemeanours, in line with Taz and Finlay.

Sam's example of Honesty demonstrates further issues with being dishonest, but also presents a reason for lying, that of compensating for feeling inadequate in front of others, or presenting an alternative self, highlighting the recognition that we hold alternative truths (Kelly, 1991).

The theme of lying to present a more preferable self is also picked up by Noah, Ash and Sam.

<p><b>NOAH</b> Honesty. NOT to lie and to tell the truth. sometimes admit what you've done wrong.</p> 	<p><u>Lies</u> Sometimes people don't use honesty so they lie.</p> 
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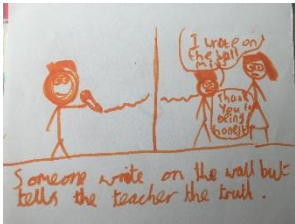
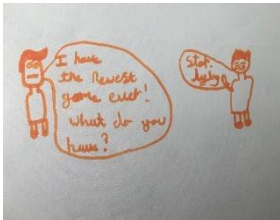




<p><b>ASH</b> Honesty is when a kid does something wrong and tells a teacher rather than lying.</p> 	<p>Honesty has an opposite side which is dishonest or lying. LYING IS NEVER OK!!!</p> 
<p><b>SEB</b> Honesty. To trust someone with what they say about something. AND TO NOT LIE!</p> 	<p>Liars. People lie to make them look cool to others.</p> 

Figure 11: Examples of Honesty with lying to present a preferable sense of self

The definitions of Honesty differ across the group. Noah identifies the place of emotion in behaviour and telling the truth, while Ash presents the importance of admitting wrongdoing (Aristotle, 2014) and Seb links the reciprocal nature of trust and honesty. All three dyadic opposites are examples of people lying about possessions they have, with Seb suggesting that this is to present a preferable image of themselves to others rather than an honest representation of themselves (Kelly, 1991).

Aisha, Poppy, Briony, Amelia and Hannah present the concept of Honesty through friendships; Poppy and Hannah through appearances, Aisha, Briony and Amelia through moving or breaking others possessions, possibly as the result of experiences where the participants had felt that their friends had been dishonest with them, leading to a feeling of betrayal.

<p><b>AISHA</b> Honesty means that you tell the truth and because it shows that your not lying because your telling the truth.</p> 	<p>Unhonesty. Unhonesty means that your lying and your not telling the truth.</p> 
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<p><b>POPPY</b> Honesty means you never lie.</p>	<p><i>Dishonest means you lie</i></p>
<p><b>BRIONY</b> Honesty to tell people when you've done something wrong</p>	<p><i>Lies. To not tell what you think or have said about someone or something.</i></p>
<p><b>AMELIA</b> Honesty. I think honesty means to tell the truth to everyone especially to people who are close to you.</p>	<p><i>I think the opposite of honesty is lies. Lies is when you are not telling the truth on purpose.</i></p>
<p><b>HANNAH</b> Honesty means love truth.</p>	<p><i>Unhonesty means lying.</i></p>

Figure 12: Examples of Honesty with lying to a friend as it's opposite

Poppy and Hannah while discussing appearances differ as Hannah is asking for her friend's honest opinion whereas Poppy is asking a factual question regarding whether there is a bug on her clothing. Hannah gauges the other person's honesty using an honesty rating chart, noting a scale of honesty rather than a bipolar honest or dishonest, problematizing honesty as a binary construct. While this issue was raised in conversation, only Hannah represented it in her rating chart.

Aisha, Briony and Amelia are concerned with friends lying about breaking or damaging possessions, while Amelia describes forgiving a friend who played a joke on her by hiding her work as she told the truth, suggesting a link with the value Forgiveness, as telling the truth almost negates the unkind act.

Friendship remains a key theme in the enactment of the values, both with positive and negative examples and while Carr (1997) acknowledges the importance of friendships in developing values, this seems to be a resource widely ignored by initiatives which aim to develop children's values. This further supports the idea of Friendship being one of the most important values and aligns with Henderson and Milstein (2003) as a protective factor.

Austin and Laura address stealing as an example of honesty and dishonesty and explore the *Relationships* with teachers as well as friends.


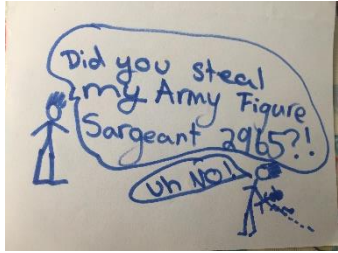
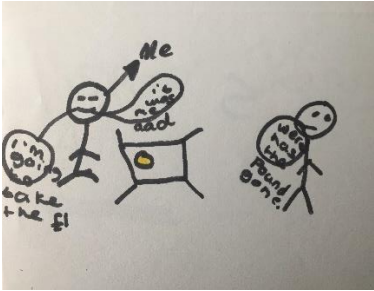
<p><b>AUSTIN</b> Honesty to me is when somebody tells a lie to the teacher and someone else is with them and they tell the truth. That is what I call honesty.</p> 	<p>I think the opposite of honesty is LYING!</p> 
<p><b>LAURA</b> Honesty is when you be honest to your teacher aspecially the head teacher.</p> 	<p>LYING IS NEVER OK!!! STOP Being A LIE</p>

Figure 13: Examples of Honesty highlighting the tensions between lying to a teacher and to friends

Austin and Laura both describe lying to school staff, however Laura's example is of someone stealing £1 from their father and Austin describes someone stealing from another child. Laura seems to categorise lying to the head teacher as worse than lying to anyone else, although in the example, they admit the truth to their parent. This could suggest that Austin and Laura have not seen any examples of stealing in school from adults. This could be described as Moral autonomy as the children have developed their own moral code and applied it to the school value (Pring, 1984)

The children's definitions seem to align fairly well with the school definition. While the term 'with love' is not used explicitly by the children, they describe the importance of apologising to friends. Forgiveness and apologising seem intrinsically linked with Honesty for a number of children, with the act of apologising seeming to negate the offence.



## Hope

Hope was not a value originally chosen by the staff, it was included at the request/insistence of the foundation governor representing the church, possibly due to it being identified as another word for faith in the school definition.

Hope as a value seemed a little more challenging as a concept for the majority of the children, with most linking it to expectation or resilience rather than faith. Hope can be seen as a representation of optimism which is viewed as a protective factor for positive mental health and resilience (Grotberg, 1995). Hope was the only value which some children were unable to define. I identified four themes;


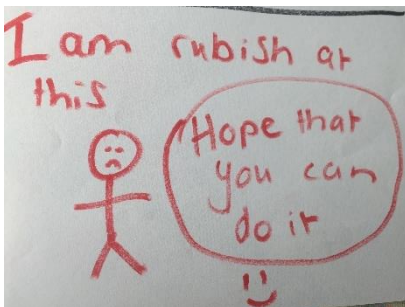
- Hope for possessions v Not hoping (Figure 14)
- Hope for recovery from illness v believing in yourself (Figure 15)
- Hope for getting your own way v giving up (Figure 16)
- Achieving success in school v not believing in yourself (Figure 17)

<b>HARRY</b> Don't know	Opposite of hope is that when you aren't doing what you really want to do.
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Figure 14: Difficulty with defining Hope

In Figure 14, Harry did not understand the concept of Hope and the attempt to define the opposite of something he did not understand confirms this, aligning with Kelly's Dichotomy corollary (Kelly, 1991). It may be that he did not understand Hope as a school value, but does not necessarily mean that he didn't understand the term Hope.

Some of the definitions were partially linked to hoping for possessions.

<p><b>APRIL</b> Hope that someone gets better! 😊 "I hope that I win £1000,0000"</p> 	<p>Not hopefull not being beliving.</p> 
<p><b>JACK</b> Hope meter 10. I hoped I would get a cabin bed. I did</p>	<p>Hope meter 0. I didn't hope for phone. I didn't get one.</p>

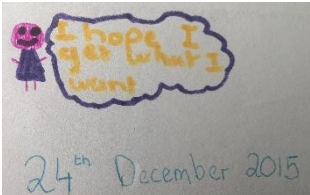
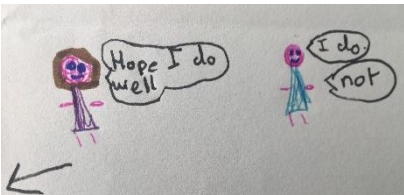
<p><b>POPPY</b> Hope is when you wish for something you want. Or when you want something for another person.</p> 	<p><b>Dishope.</b> Dishope is when you lie about hoping.</p> 
--	---

Figure 15: Examples of Hope for possessions with Not hoping as it's opposite

While all three children mention material things they are hoping for, April also hopes that someone gets better and Poppy hopes for something for someone else. The opposite of Hope, for April and Jack, seems not to be opposite of their definitions of hope, but, instead, more linked to belief in their abilities to achieve, almost lacking faith (in the secular sense) in their own abilities. The Hope for material things may align with a more secular definition, but nothing in April, Jack or Poppy's interpretations align with the school definition.

Finlay and Hannah highlight the theme of hoping someone gets better, with Hannah using a specific example of hoping her Year 2 teacher would recover. This could align with the notion of 'magical thinking' which is linked to a developmental stage in children in believing that their thoughts and wishes can make things happen (Piaget, 1997), but is also sometimes applied to religion with people using prayer to wish for things to happen (Collins, 2008).

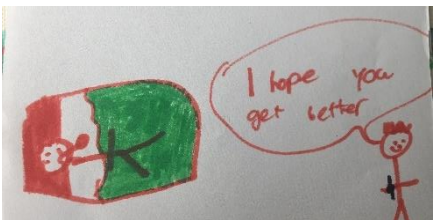
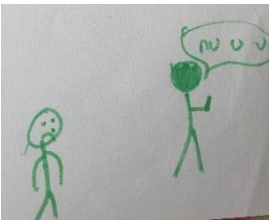
<p><b>FINLAY</b> If someone is sick you can hope they will get better.</p> 	<p>You don't believe in your self or someone else.</p> 
<p><b>HANNAH</b> I hope that in my new school I get lots of new friends. I saw hope at school when in year 2 my teacher was ill. I hoped she would get better and she did.</p>	<p>Hoping is like believing and if you have no hope you don't believe in anything. If you don't believe in yourself you won't get anywhere</p>

Figure 16: Examples of Hope for recovery from illness with believing in yourself as it's opposite

Hannah conveys a slight anxiety at her changing schools when she hopes for lots of new friends at her new school.

While both Finlay and Hannah think about hoping someone gets better as an example of Hope, their opposite definition is again linked with not believing in yourself, more aligned with a notion of resilience as identified in the Self-Characterisations rather than any definition of Hope, suggesting a lack of understanding of Hope (Henderson and Milstein, 2003).

Jamilah and Josiah defined Hope as getting your own way with Florence specifically hoping for the school coloured pens.

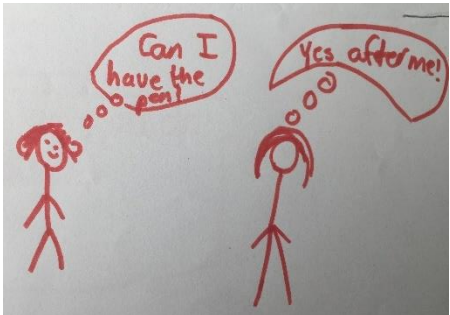
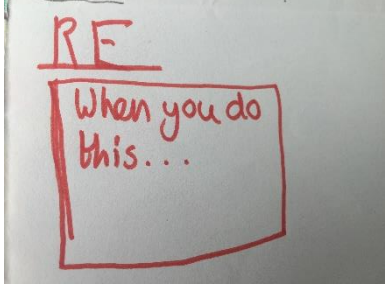
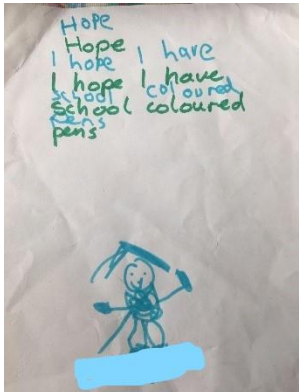
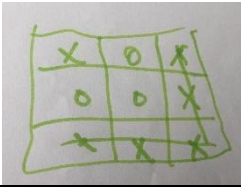
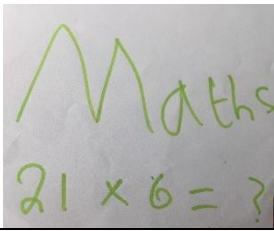
<p><b>JAMILAH</b> <i>Get your own way and for the best.</i></p> 	<p><i>Not taking efforts to think I can do something.</i></p> 
<p><b>FLORENCE</b></p> 	
<p><b>JOSIAH</b> <i>get your own way and never give up like in Norts and crosses I always win.</i></p> 	<p><i>Opposite of hope is giving up!</i></p> 

Figure 17: Examples of Hope for getting your own way with giving up as it's opposite

However, Jamilah also defines the opposite of hope as a lack of self-belief again suggesting a lack of resilience, not seemingly linked to her definition of Hope (Henderson and Milstein, 2003). While this may suggest that the concept of Hope is too tricky to understand, it may also be that Resilience is a more important value to Jamilah. Florence was unable to identify the opposite of Hope while Josiah talks about Hope as never giving up, with the opposite giving up, using a multiplication sum as the example. This demonstrates more consistency and constancy in thinking but does not align with the school definition of Hope (Adams-Webber, 1979).

Figure 18 highlights the links between the value of Hope to achieving well in school.



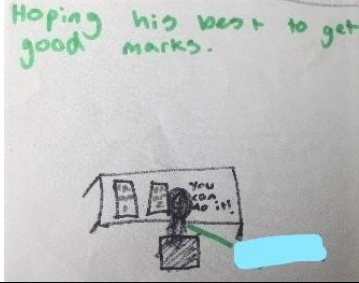




<p><b>NOAH</b> Hoping that you do well in a exam.</p> 	<p>The opposite of hope in school is when you have a hard test and you think it's hard and you give up.</p> 
<p><b>ASH</b> hoping to achieve great educational needs. Hoping not to worry.</p> 	<p>You feel like you can't do it. You're not going to do it! Bad mind thinking. something related to it is no confidence. DON'T GIVE UP!</p> <p>What is the equivalent fraction 95682135?</p> <p>WORK!</p> <p>I can't do it teacher!</p>
<p><b>LOGAN</b> Positive not negative Hoping for good grades.</p> 	<p>Negative thortz. Don't belive in yourself.</p> 
<p><b>RONAN</b> You hope that you get go graids when you do a test.</p> 	<p>You don't bilve that people have faith in you and wan't you to loose.</p> 

Figure 18: Examples of Hope as Achieving success in school with not believing in yourself as it's opposite.

While all four children are hoping for good grades, the opposites give insight into their understanding of Hope. Noah and Ash consider the opposite of Hope to giving up, with Ash adding the influence of lack of confidence, a point taken up by Logan who links it to negative thoughts. Ronan presents the opposite of Hope as having more to do with others' perceptions of him and their lack of faith in him, presenting hope as an extrinsically applied value rather than an intrinsic value (Kant, 2001). The use of the term faith is interesting as it is included in the school definition, but Ronan's interpretation does not align with a religious definition, instead describing the belief of others in him.

Hope proved tricky for all the children, they tended to link it to persistence, resilience and self-belief, and, when linked with school, purely relating to achieving good grades (Henderson and Milstein, 2003). This may support the initial reluctance on the part of the school staff to include Hope as a value due to the children's lack of understanding of and engagement with it as a value.

## Forgiveness

The children seemed to have a clear understanding of this value, but their reasoning behind it did not relate to God. They suggested that school staff did not practise it leading to a belief that this was unfair. Forgiveness was mentioned in discussions about Love and Honesty, demonstrating understanding of the connections between the values. I identified four themes in the children's data;

- Forgiveness v Opposite of sorry (Figure 19)
- Admitting fault to friends v Not forgiving (Figure 20)
- Looking after people v Saying sorry (Figure 21)
- Unconditional forgiveness v Not feeling ready to forgive (Figures 22 and 23)

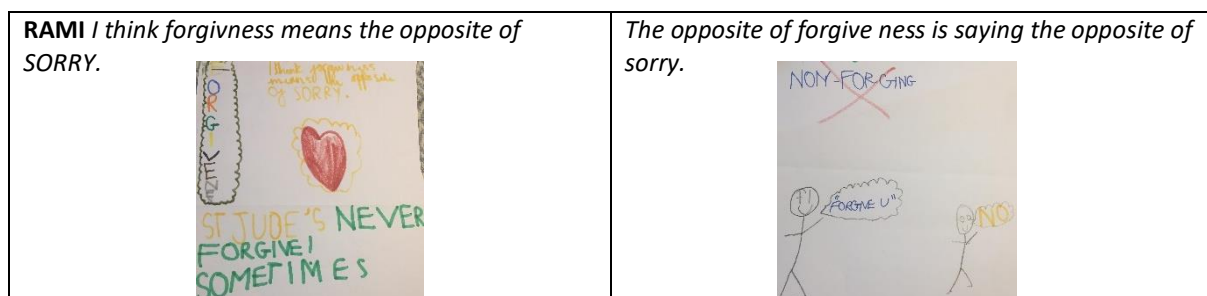


Figure 19: Example of Forgiveness with the Opposite of sorry as it's opposite

Rami was very vocal about how staff did not forgive and was able to give examples in discussions with the other children about this. He was the only one who chose to write about this, but qualified his initial 'NEVER' with 'SOMETIMES'. It is unclear whether the opposite of forgiveness is between friends, but the height differential suggests it is between an adult and child.

The rest of the children focused on forgiveness between friends highlighting Friendship and Conflict Resolution as important values (Henderson and Milstein, 2003).


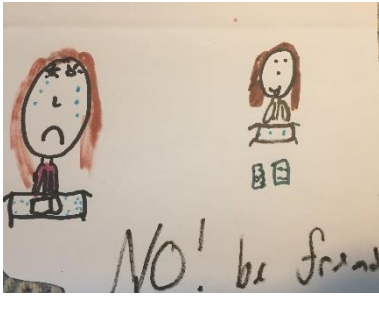

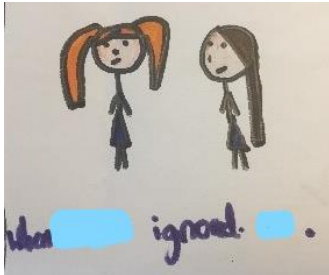
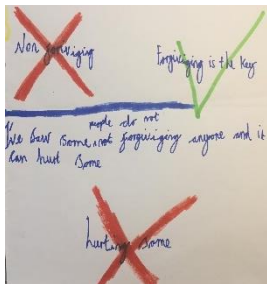
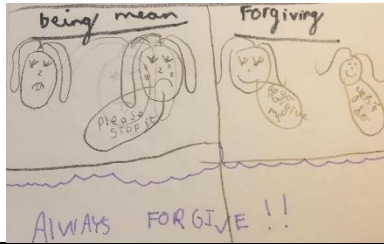
<p><b>DHANYA</b> Forgiveness means you have to Be honest to people so if you had a fight about telling other secrets. If your telling another person a secret the other person might not like another person saying a secret to them and you have to forgive them.</p> 	<p>The opposite of forgiveness is when your walking away and still being mean!</p> 
<p><b>SAFFRON</b> Forgiveness Forgiving Forgive.</p> 	<p>Unforgiving Not forgiving people.</p> 
<p><b>JOSIAH</b> It means that you are forgiving people who done a mistake.</p> <p>I have never seen anyone forgiveness</p>	<p>When you don't forgive and if people do a mistake and people don't forgive you, you may be alone.</p> 

Figure 20: Examples of Forgiveness: Admitting fault to friends with Not forgiving as it's opposite

Dhanya links Forgiveness to Honesty, specifically about a friend betraying another's trust and acknowledging that people can forgive but still be upset, with the opposite communicating her emphasis on the importance of friendship, over-riding making mistakes. Saffron continues with the complexity of friendships, presenting a time when she forgave her friend and conversely when a friend ignored another friend rather than forgiving them; thus suggesting that it is more important to maintain friendships than to hold onto grudges. Josiah presents the importance of letting things go, pointing out that if someone fails to forgive others, they may be left without friends. This seems to present a mature attitude and an understanding of the complexities around managing Relationships (Henderson and Milstein, 2003).



**JAMILAH** Forgiveness means when you do something mean to another person but the person your being mean to has to say sorry in a nice way. FORGIVE!



The opposite of forgiveness is where know one likes you.

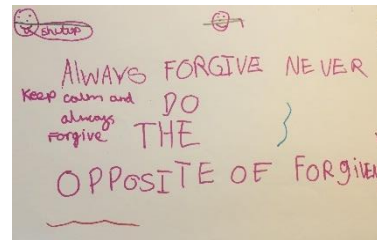


Figure 21: Example of Forgiveness admitting fault to friends with Saying sorry as it's opposite

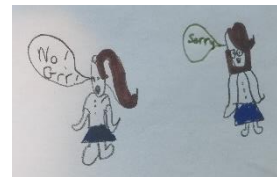
This point is also raised by Jamilah, but she also includes the importance of apologising, and describes the manner in which the apology is given, shifting the onus of responsibility from the forgiver to the forgivee; in the picture both girls are depicted as happy. In line with Josiah, she also notes that people may become isolated if they are unable to forgive others.

Hannah, Aibala, Finlay and Kim note the functional application of forgiveness.

**HANNAH** Showing people you care for them when they hurt you.



Not saying sorry, never saying sorry, never forgiving, being mean, not forgiving.



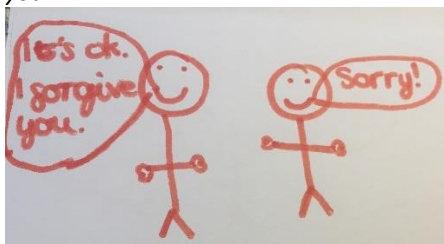
**AIBALA** Forgiveness means say someone lied to you you let them say sorry and then you accept there apologise.



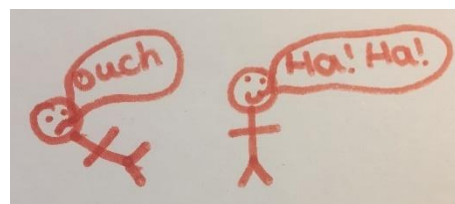
The opposite of forgiveness is say someone was mean to you and they say sorry. you who don't accept their apologise.



**KIM** If you get into a fight with someone, you should always say sorry and they will forgive you.



The opposite of forgiveness is when you hurt someone and don't say sorry so they can't forgive you.



<p><b>AMELIA</b> Showing people you will forgive them when they do something wrong.</p>	<p>The opposite of forgiveness is not saying sorry and never forgiving them. The opposite of forgiveness is never saying sorry.</p>
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Figure 22: Examples of Forgiveness addressing the process of forgiving

The sequence, according to Hannah, Aibala, Finlay and Amelia is that someone does something mean, then apologises, the victim accepts the apology and they can be friends again, however Kim notes the imperative nature of apologising, as without the apology there can be no forgiveness in line with the school definition. Amelia describes an example where she could forgive her friend for a fight, but her example of not being able to forgive is linked to her friend cheating at a test, suggesting that she was able to forgive in the case of an argument, but not when she felt there was deception. This seems to be an example of where Amelia has developed her own values and moral code as a result of her experiences and not as a result of extrinsically imposed values (Halstead and Taylor, 2000).

Aisha and Seamus raise a challenging issue with the value of Forgiveness.

<p><b>AISHA</b> Forgiveness means to me that somebody says or does something really unkind. But then they actually don't mean it. So they apologise by saying sorry. Then the other person says it's okay.</p>	<p>The opposite of FORGIVENESS! (you should never do). When you have someone who's mean, it makes you want to scream, if you need it to be solved ask a teacher. But sometimes you really hurt their feelings so they don't forgive.</p>
<p><b>SEAMUS</b> I think forgiveness means not caring when people do bad things to you.</p>	<p>The opposite of forgiveness is unforgiveness.</p>

Figure 23: Issues around Forgiveness



Seamus establishes a worrying perception of Forgiveness, that of not caring when others cause hurt or upset; this could be genuinely not caring or may be an attitude which he felt he needed to develop in order to comply with Forgiveness. This point is taken further by Aisha when she describes a racist insult which she feels she has to forgive unconditionally. This picture is particularly interesting as the seemingly replicated example depicts two white girls rather than one white and one black girl where the blond girl is apologising. The opposite as described by Aisha is a pencil drawing so the ethnicity is unclear, however the unforgiven insult is 'pongo pants' rather than 'brownie cry baby'. This could suggest that Aisha views both comments as equally insulting or may depict an example where she felt she had to forgive, possibly under adult instruction (Dewey, 1966). Soraya develops this point further with the issue of Forgiveness.

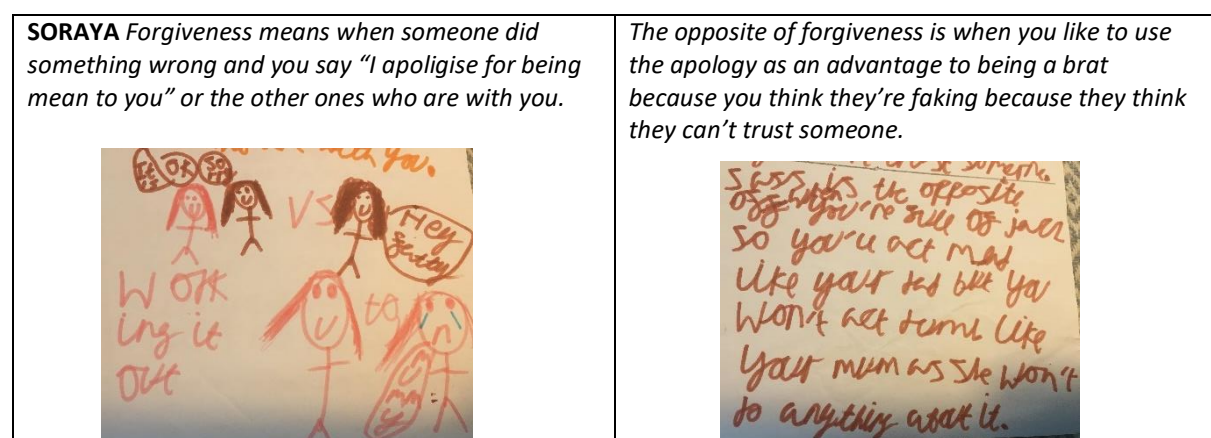


Figure 24: Forgiveness as deception

She seems to draw a black girl and a white girl and depicts the two working out an issue with the black girl calling the other girl 'Fatty'. However, it is in her opposite of Forgiveness where she addresses the issue of people apologising disingenuously in order to secure an advantage over the other person. The meaning of the opposite image seems a little unclear in linking it to Forgiveness; one of the reasons Soraya was selected for the RGTs was in order to further explore her interpretation of her school experience.

The children's definitions of Forgiveness did seem to broadly align with the school definition, but also raised questions about some of the problems with forgiveness as an issue, both consciously, such as with Soraya, and also subconsciously, raising questions about accepting unkind behaviours as long as it is accompanied by an apology. Forgiveness seems to be inextricably linked with the children's value of Friendship; they recognise that in order to maintain friendships, there are times when they need to forgive and times they will need to apologise. This suggests that Forgiveness could be a representation of both *Life Skills* and *Pro-social bonding* with the children recognising that

*Life Skills* need to be developed for effective *Pro-Social bonding* or Friendships (Henderson and Milstein, 2003).

### Summary

The group values activity explicitly asked the children to discuss the school values and their examples/experiences of them. However, the children's representations and understanding of the values served to further clarify their own personal values (Halstead and Taylor, 2000). As in the Self-Characterisations, the value of Friendship appeared to be of vital importance to the majority of the participants and enabled them to frame their thinking about the school values. Respect was a value which seemed important when discussing Love and Forgiveness as was the importance of Persistence and Resilience. As with the Self-Characterisations, the themes identified by the children seemed to align with the protective factors highlighted by Henderson and Milstein (2003); *Care and Support* and *Pro-Social Bonding* seemed to underpin the discussion with all four values, *Clear, Consistent Boundaries* were mentioned, particularly when describing the opposites of the values and highlighted when they felt these boundaries had not been maintained, particularly with the lack of forgiveness and with people not being corrected for perceived wrongdoings. The children demonstrate *High Expectations* for themselves and others, particularly regarding their expectations for behaviour, but also in being a resilient learner. *Life Skills* underpin all four values as the children address issues around conflict resolution and tolerance (DfE, 2014). While *Meaningful Participation* is not explicitly mentioned by the participants, the children saw the activity as of importance and an opportunity to share their honest reflections about the school, and as such, the activity could be viewed as an enactment of *Meaningful Participation* (Henderson and Milstein, 2003).

The children seemed to have developed their own understanding of the school values, but these did not replicate the school definitions, suggesting that the children had an awareness of the school values but were guided by their own values which they had developed as a result of their experiences and *Relationships* with others (Plato, 2013; Kant, 1996; Dewey, 1975).

### Repertory Grid Technique

The Repertory Grids were undertaken with six children, four from Class 1 (Bethany, Seb, Soraya and Harry) and two from Class 2 (Austin and Esther). Austin and Esther chose freely from the 22 elements elicited from the Self-Characterisations with an option to add any which they wanted included. Bethany, Seb, Soraya and Harry chose from homogenous elements relating to the school day (Pope and Denicolo, 2001) in order to assess the most effective way of generating constructs.

Each child's Repertory Grid is presented in turn. To begin a descriptive analysis will observe immediate points of interests for individual grids (Jankowicz, 2004). Further analysis explores the construction elicitation and findings, then identifies common themes which arose in them, to identify core constructs and peripheral constructs (Jankowicz, 2004). I analyse the way the participants' constructs align with Kelly's corollaries, making links to Constructive Alternativism (Kelly, 1991). All grids were discussed and agreed with the pupils to ensure they were happy with the way they were represented and to ensure clarity of meaning. In order to ensure the children were involved in the analysis of the RGTs, the children were then asked to look at the completed grids and to identify what they thought they represented as of importance to them; these are represented as the participants' conclusions alongside my conclusions. The figures in the grids are where the children were asked to rate each element against the constructs with 1 aligning to the emergent pole and 5 aligning with the implicit pole. The children's use of the ratings will be addressed individually.

## **Seb**

### *The Topic (My School)*

I chose Seb because his Self-Characterisation was very different from the way he presents in class. He is seen as a high achieving pupil by his teacher and has a small group of friends who he always plays with. He is quiet and thoughtful in class. His Self-Characterisation expressed a very negative approach to school, but also a slightly playful side, depicting himself as a mad scientist with experiments going wrong.

I selected Seb with the support of his teachers due to his engagement with the research. His Self-Characterisation enabled him to communicate thoughts about school which he had not previously done with adults. In class this is replicated with Seb seemingly not participating in class discussions or group tasks, preferring to work individually. However, when I consulted him about being involved in the Repertory Grid session he was enthusiastic and keen to share his thoughts about school.

### *Element selection*

Seb selected ten homogenous elements relating to the school day elicited from the Self-Characterisations (see grid); he did not choose to add any of his own. The elements he selected were consistent with his Self-Characterisation themes apart from the inclusion of reward time rather than science suggesting consistency in thinking (Greene and Hill, 2005).

<i>Emergent pole</i>	<i>Getting to school</i>	<i>Registration</i>	<i>Maths</i>	<i>Assembly</i>	<i>Playtime</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>Lunchtime</i>	<i>PE</i>	<i>Reward time</i>	<i>Art</i>	<i>Implicit pole</i>
Get out, do something	1	5	5	5	1	3	1	1	3	3	Generally inside
You're just listening, not interacting	1	1	5	1	5	5	3	5	5	5	More your decision and input
Listen to what you can do, then do-your decision	5	1	5	3	1	1	3	5	1	5	Told to copy something-you don't choose
No choice to do anything-do as you are told-no option; have to contribute	5	1	1	5	3	3	1	3	1	1	Don't do anything, sit and listen
Get out and do something-have choice	1	5	3	5	1	1	1	3	1	3	Told to copy something

*Figure 25: Seb's Repertory Grid*

### *The Ratings*

Seb only used 1s, 3s and 5s throughout the process suggesting he used a trichotomous approach in his categorising of the elements providing a clear distinction between the elements.

### *Construct analysis*

Construct 1 appeared at first an unremarkable construct, or behavioural as it seems to merely describe situation, however the inclusion of 'do something' could be seen as attributional, suggesting that inside events involve passivity rather than activity which Seb, in this construct appears to link with outside (Jankowicz, 2004). The other constructs all appeared to be Core constructs and were concerned with Seb's values of autonomy, participation and choice. Construct 5 combines constructs 1 and 3 and starts to illustrate the limitations I found using the homogenous elements. The construct could be viewed as unremarkable due to the procedural nature, but the links to the Core construct of autonomy and active learning support and enrich the other constructs.

The element ratings suggest that he views English, Playtime, Lunchtime, PE and Reward Time as times where he has more opportunities for autonomy, choice and participation; Assembly, getting to school and Registration were viewed as times when there was little opportunity for a democratic approach.

Construct 1 seems to align with the Construction corollary and suggests that Seb is looking for patterns in his school day. The issues of participation and autonomy are raised with Construct 2 which was foregrounded by Seb in his Self-Characterisation suggesting a constancy of thought in line with the Modulation Corollary (Kelly, 1991). Construct 3 could be an example of Kelly's

Fragmentation Corollary with Seb seemingly holding inconsistent and incompatible beliefs, however the use of the word 'Copying' seems to highlight something of significance to Seb. For Construct 4 the poles appeared at first to be very similar. The difference between the two identified using laddering was the active and passive side of no choice (Fransella and Bannister, 1977). The more positive choices for Seb here were 3s which he felt didn't fit either pole, which seemed an unusual use of the emergent and implicit poles and linked to trichotomous poles rather than as presented in the Dichotomy Corollary (Kelly, 1991). Constructs 4 and 5 identify areas of active engagement and seem to align with the Choice corollary (Kelly, 1991).

### *Conclusions*

*"I like it when they give you choices"*  
*"Maths you are right or wrong-English you are just right"*  
*"Choice is important like interacting"*

### *Seb's conclusions after reflecting on his Repertory grid*

These reflections link with Seb's Self-Characterisation. He feels a lack of choice and control in school which appears to stifle him. Seb works well when given more autonomy, and he recognises this.

The elements which Seb aligns to are those times in the day which meet his needs for autonomy, choice and participation. These elements are Getting to school, playtime, lunchtime, English and Reward time. Assembly represents the opposite to this, a time where Seb has to sit still, listen and conform to authoritative demands without discussion (Gill and Halstead, 2000).

Overall, the themes of choice, control, and participation seemed to be an element in each construct.

## **Bethany**

### *The Topic (My School)*

Bethany was selected for me by her class teacher as she had communicated a desire to talk further about school after completing the Self-Characterisation. Her Self-Characterisation suggested a more subversive side than she usually presents to her teachers, but she seems generally happy at school and was very happy to talk about it.

### Element selection

Bethany selected from elements all of a type which linked to events in the school day. They were elicited from the Self-Characterisations from both classes. In hindsight I would have liked to compare this with a free choice of elements.

<i>Emergent pole</i>	<i>Getting to school</i>	<i>Registration</i>	<i>Maths</i>	<i>Assembly</i>	<i>Playtime</i>	<i>English/reading</i>	<i>Lunchtime</i>	<i>PE</i>	<i>Reward time</i>	<i>Art</i>	<i>Implicit pole</i>
Out of school getting fresh air	1	2	5	3	1	5	1	3	1	3	In school learning
Not writing down learning, you are still learning for your future	1	1	5	2	1	5	1	2	1	3	Writing down learning-more useful
In school, getting refreshed, not learning	5	4	N/A	1	1	N/A	1	3	1	N/A	Haven't learnt anything-not in school
Learning	3	2	1	2	5	1	5	4	5	4	Having fun
Learning	3	3	1	2	4	3	4	4.5	5	4.5	Having time to be
Learning something	4	3	1	2	5	1	5	4	5	4	Being free-not having to be really sophisticated in what you are doing

Figure 26: Bethany's Repertory Grid

### The Ratings

Bethany took a precise approach to the ratings, using decimal points in Learning V Having time to be. Bethany's use of decimal places could suggest that it would have been more useful with her to use a seven-point scale, it also demonstrates her engagement with the ratings system. She used the range of ratings, adopting a more measured approach and demonstrating a really thoughtful approach to using the ratings; for example, in Construct 3 where elements did not fit to either pole, rather than using 3, she chose not to include them.

### Construct analysis

Constructs 1 and 2 appeared at first to be Behavioural concerned with the mechanics of learning, however discussion about the ratings provided insight which seem more Attributional and nuanced as Bethany ascribes reasons for the behaviour. Construct 3 could at first be read as Unremarkable, but the links to feeling refreshed more closely aligns with an Affective construct as it is concerned

with feelings. Construct 5 is a Pre-emptive construct, but one which enables Bethany to develop her thinking for Construct 6, building on Construct 4, both of which are Core constructs, the repetition reinforcing this (Fransella and Bannister, 1977). The Core constructs suggest a notion of learning as being part conformity; the prevailing theme which is that of autonomy perceiving learning as a restrictive rather than an emancipatory activity (Jankowicz, 2004).

Construct 1 appears to align with Kelly's Organisation corollary, as this enables Bethany to hold and organise constructs, depending on whether they are outside or in school learning. Construct 2 seems to align with the Construction corollary with Bethany using her knowledge of the format of the subjects to construct her beliefs about school (Kelly, 1991). Construct 3 could align with the Range corollary with Bethany recognising that her constructs may not be easily applied to all elements (Kelly, 1991).

Construct 4 aligns with Kelly's Dichotomy corollary with the opposite of Learning being Fun clarifying Bethany's understanding of learning (Kelly, 1991). In Construct 5 Bethany continues to communicate her dislike of Assembly and Maths as corroborated by her Self-Characterisation. This consistency in thinking could be an example of the modulation corollary; despite differing experiences, the construct remains constant (Kelly, 1991). Construct 6 aligns with the Individuality corollary and presents Bethany's idiosyncratic way of interpreting and predicting events (Kelly, 1991).

### *Conclusion*

*Playtime you might be thinking what is ahead of you, thinking about school.  
English is learning-reading is learning, but also time to be.  
Assembly, you are learning something, not completely free-have to do what you are told.  
Safe learning, you can be free in what you do.*

### *Bethany's conclusions after reflecting on her Repertory Grid*

Bethany seemed to align more to the elements which provided a more democratic, less authoritarian approach such as Art, PE and break times. More formal lessons such as maths English and Assembly were consistently viewed as the opposite of fun. Construct 5 suggests that Bethany identifies the lack of Flow in learning, with Learning as the Emergent Pole and Having time to be as the Implicit Pole.

The constructs became limited, due, I feel, to the limited elements but also due to a consistency in the message which Bethany wanted to share. Bethany split her constructs into learning and not learning. Not learning appeared to be linked with fun, relaxation, being free, not having to maintain an image. In contrast, learning appeared to be limited, the only development on learning I could elicit was writing and learning *something*, this appeared to be linked to teacher giving information to

learn, rather than experiential learning which she begins to talk about in her second construct but chooses not to develop. Overall, themes which I noted were Bethany's linking of learning to writing and the incompatibility of fun and learning. The importance of refreshing and being free kept coming up suggesting a desire for space in learning through a democratic and autonomous approach which recognises her agency (Glasser, 1986).

## Harry

### *The Topic (My School)*

Harry was the person who wanted to know if I really wanted the truth. Due to his questions I was expecting some controversial views. He was keen to talk about school and appeared to take on board the confidentiality aspect, despite this he didn't present anything particularly controversial, but had some interesting perspectives and used the word "free" three times in his constructs.

### *Element Selection*

Harry selected from elements all of a type which linked to events in the school day. They were elicited from the Self-Characterisations from both classes. In hindsight I would have liked to compare this with a free choice of elements.

<i>Emergent pole</i>	<i>Getting to school</i>	<i>Registration</i>	<i>Maths</i>	<i>Assembly</i>	<i>Playtime</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>Lunchtime</i>	<i>PE</i>	<i>Reward time</i>	<i>Art</i>	<i>Implicit pole</i>
Playing but with routine	1	4	5	3	1	5	1	1	1	2	Work-more doing in class
With your class	2	1	1	5	5	1	5	1	1	1	Whole school-everyone there
Free-do what you want with friends	1	3	5	4	1	5	1	2	1	5	Lesson
Getting taught how to do it	5	2	1	3	5	1	5	3	5	2	Not in school waiting
Everyone free to do what they want	1	5	4	5	1	4	1	2	1	3	Listening to someone altogether
Using books to write down information	4	3	1	1	5	1	5	3	5	3	Do the things you want, free time, fresh air

Figure 27: Harry's repertory grid



### *The Ratings*

Harry used the full range of ratings, some of the constructs were more concrete (with your class v everyone there] so elicited 1s and 5s, but he rated thoughtfully the more abstract ideas, using the full range of ratings in Constructs 1,3 and 5.

### *Construct Analysis*

Construct 1 appears to be a Behavioural construct, describing what the elements do and how he behaves in them (Jankowicz, 2004). Construct 2 can be interpreted as a concrete construct and generated little discussion due to the nature of the construct. It could be described as an Unremarkable construct as it is a simple representation of the school systems (Jankowicz, 2004). However, Construct 3 starts to develop the theme of freedom which Harry raised as the interview progressed and seems to be an attributional construct, qualifying the idea of free; it also seems to illustrate a Core construct of Harry's, the desire to socialise and have some autonomy (Jankowicz, 2004). Initially Construct 4 appears to be a Behavioural construct, but the inclusion of 'waiting' suggests it may link and underpin Harry's Core constructs (Jankowicz, 2004). The repetition of freedom in Construct 5 suggests that this is a Core construct for Harry and continues to build on the desire for freedom to act more autonomously (Fransella and Bannister, 1977; Jankowicz, 2004).

Construct 1 illustrates the Dichotomy corollary as it seems to present the opposites of work and play, enabling Harry to categorise the elements with ease (Kelly, 1991). Construct 2 links with the Construction corollary with Harry using his knowledge to predict his school experience (Kelly, 1991).

Construct 3 appears to illustrate the sociality corollary with Harry both describing common events which all his colleagues would experience, however the freedom aspect may make it more linked to the Commonality construct where he recognises that while all will experience these times, his view as a time of freedom may be idiosyncratic (Kelly, 1991). The acknowledgement of agency in Harry's construct 4 may be an example of the Choice corollary choosing this construct to illustrate his school experience (Kelly, 1991), it also suggests a desire for autonomy and independence in his learning (Aristotle, 2014). Construct 5 seems concerned again with a desire for autonomy and independence and may link with the Sociality corollary as it is concerned with predicting other's behaviour alongside his own (Aristotle, 2014; Kelly, 1991). It could be suggested that Construct 6 illustrates the Fragmentation corollary as there appear to be inconsistencies, however they appear consistent with Harry's constructs again citing autonomy as a desirable state (Aristotle, 2014; Kelly, 1991).

## Conclusions

Getting to do the thing you want-enjoyment.  
 Can do group discussion.  
 Teacher tells you what to do.  
 It is important to do lessons and have free time.

### Harry's conclusions after reflecting on his grid

The elements which Harry appeared to align with were Getting to school and Reward time, these were times when he seemed to feel that he was able to be more autonomous and free. The constructs became limited, due, I feel, to the limited elements, but I do feel that he had a different angle to the others who had the same choice of elements, not dividing the elements between learning and not learning, but focusing on aspects of freedom in learning and autonomy. This was reflected in Harry's Self-Characterisation which suggests constancy in his thinking (Adams-Webber, 1979).

## Austin

### The Topic (My School)

Austin found the subject interesting and relevant. He was pleased to be able to express his opinions as he didn't feel that he was often asked about school.

### Element selection

Austin could freely choose from the 22 elements elicited from the Self-Characterisations and add any of his own which he felt were of most significance about school. He added 'Children' as an element in addition to friends as he felt this was an important difference.

Topic: School Emergent pole	Classroom routines	Getting to school	Teachers	Reading	Friends	Registration	Lunchtime	School dinners	Playtime	Children	Implicit pole
Building blocks of school, still important, first level of the pyramid	5	2	1	4	2	4	2	3	2	5	How the school happens- Foundation of school
Subject based	4	5	4	1	4	1	5	2	5	2	Stage based
Stages of day	1	1	5	2	5	1	1	2	2	5	Person based-not stage of day
When children have a break and a snack. (set times). Basic needs	5	2	5	4	2	2	1	2	1	3	Learning based
Friends/human based/friendly	1	5	1	5	1	4	1	5	1	1	Mostly by yourself. Independent

Figure 28: Austin's Repertory grid

### *The Ratings*

Austin's methodical approach meant that he was able to rank and re-order elements when he compared them with other elements. He only used 3 twice in the grid; in Construct 1 he viewed School Dinners as both part of the Foundations of school and as a Building block, while in Construct 4 he asserted that Children were at the centre of both the Emergent and Implicit poles. This use of the ratings may suggest a certainty in his belief system.

### *Construct Analysis*

Austin's first construct seems Behavioural as it describes the function of the elements within the school setting (Jankowicz, 2004). Austin had a clear picture of what made Teachers and friends similar and children different. He saw Children and Classroom routines as the firm foundations of what a school needs to have. He saw reading and registration as key foundations with school dinners at 3 as a bit of both. Playtime, lunchtimes and getting to school he viewed more as first level of the pyramid, along with friends. Teachers were the strongest building block rather than foundation. Construct 2 could be viewed as a propositional construct, seemingly superficial, however when viewed in terms of Austin's desire for predictability and routine it is more likely to be a Core construct (Jankowicz, 2004). Construct 3 is a Behavioural construct as it describes what the elements do which enables Austin to categorise them with ease (Jankowicz, 2004). The construct seems a development of the previous construct; a clarification of his thinking moving on to stages of the day as imposed and school centred. Construct 4 could appear an Unremarkable construct, the identification of basic human needs and the placing of children at 3 suggests that Austin values a child centred approach, understanding that both basic needs and learning needs should be met in a school setting. This could suggest that it is an Evaluative construct as he seems to communicate an opinion about the basic needs being met (Jankowicz, 2004). Construct 5 can be viewed as a Core construct; this was of fundamental importance to Austin and was picked up by him in his reflections on his Repertory grid (Jankowicz, 2004).

Austin's first construct seems to align with Kelly's Construction corollary as he seems to be interested in the patterns and processes of the school in this construct in order to enable him to predict the events, providing him with an element of safety (Kelly, 1991). The second construct links to Kelly's Fundamental postulate which links to Austin's need to predict the future based on his experiences and to prepare himself for the school day (Kelly, 1991). Austin categorises Construct 3 by its fixed time in the day rather than in the activity. This may link with the Fragmentation corollary whereby Austin's idiosyncratic take may appear inconsistent, but his discussion demonstrates consistency in his desire for routine and democracy (Kelly, 1991). Construct 4 could link to the Commonality construct as Austin recognises that while certain events such as Getting to school,

friends, registration and school dinners may be experienced in common, others may not construe them in the same way (Kelly, 1991). While Construct 5 refers to the fundamental postulate, it also links to the Modulation corollary which suggests a steady and regulated system; the bipolarity of the elements may suggest a more entrenched and firmly held construct (Kelly, 1991; Adams-Webber, 1979).

## Conclusions

*"School routine is the foundation of the school, teachers and friends are the building blocks."  
"Sometimes if you don't work independently you never work it out."  
"If you don't want to be friends you still need to be friendly"*

### *Austin's conclusions after reflecting on his grid*

Austin had had a very disrupted couple of years in school prior to year 4 with a number of different teachers, not all of whom gave him the structure he wanted, subsequently his behaviour deteriorated and he was not achieving his potential in his learning. His Year 4 teacher had very clear boundaries and as a result Austin had flourished, both socially and academically. This could be what he reflects in his first construct.

Austin had a fairly balanced alignment to the elements, not seeming to view any as negative, possibly as a result of having free choice from the 22 elements so choosing ten which he aligned with. This may also be due to Austin feeling happier with school life in general and feeling that he is listened to and an acceptance that things may not always go well. This resilient attitude is reflected in his Self-Characterisation, again demonstrating constancy in his constructs (Adams-Webber, 1979).

Austin is an excellent communicator and was able to work through the "How are the two the same and different?" questions methodically, and thoroughly until he was happy that we both understood his meaning. He was only happy with sticking to his first answer for subject based v stage based.

Austin's constructions suggest a desire for routine and the importance of good structures and systems within a school. Alongside this he notes the importance of the people in a school and the need for them to co-operate and collaborate while acknowledging the lack of autonomy sometimes experienced by staff and children.

## Esther

### *The Topic (My school)*

Esther enjoyed talking about the topic and is always happy to offer ideas as to way things could work better, she is confident that her ideas will be listened to and that her ideas are valid.

### *Element selection*

Esther chose freely from the 22 elements elicited from the Self-Characterisations. She chose to add 'Children' as an element to differentiate between friends.

<i>Topic: School</i> <i>Emergent pole</i>	<i>Friends</i>	<i>Children</i>	<i>School dinners</i>	<i>Registration</i>	<i>Getting to School</i>	<i>Teachers</i>	<i>Classroom routine</i>	<i>Reward time</i>	<i>PE</i>	<i>Breaktimes</i>	<i>Implicit pole</i>
School routines-only happen at school	5	3	2	1	1	4	2	4	3	3	You can have friends in and out of school/ not just about school
Children and friends really important-if you are sad it can affect your work	1	1	3	3	2	2	3	1	2	4	Time to rest your mind-sometimes to rest and sometimes to talk
Happen in a certain way in Class 2	3	4	5	5	5	5	2	1	4	5	Same for everyone at school
Preparation for the day	2	3	4	1	1	3	1	5	3	5	Time to blank your mind
Time to relax and talk to your friends	1	1	3	3	4	4	5	1	4	1	Not time to talk-have to concentrate on work

Figure 29: Esther's Repertory grid

### *The Ratings*

Esther used more 3s than I anticipated as she has strong opinions on most things, however looking at the ways she has used the 3, it is in a more "both" sense rather than not sure or neutral.

### *Construct analysis*

Construct 1 appears Behavioural, but the inclusion of friends in the construct suggests that this is one of Esther's Core constructs as it is a recurrent theme throughout the interview (Fransella and Bannister, 1977; Jankowicz, 2004). Construct 2 is an Affective and Attributional construct as it expresses emotion but goes on to explain how this affects behaviour (Jankowicz, 2004). Construct 3 is, superficially, a behavioural construct with Esther describing differing systems within the school.

However, it is important to Esther and the discussion suggested a certain pride in the way things were done in her class so cannot be viewed as merely a procedural or process based construct and is more likely to be a Core construct (Jankowicz, 2004). Construct 4 again seems a Behavioural construct, as it is linked to different events in the school day. However further discussion with Esther denotes this as a Core construct as Esther acknowledges the importance of good preparation for a successful day alongside times when she can relax and recharge (Jankowicz, 2004). Esther's final construct had a clear division which reflects Esther's behaviour in class; she has clear ideas of how people should behave. While this could seem an Unremarkable construct if seen as talking or not talking, it is a Core construct for Esther as it underpins her predictions for the school experience (Jankowicz, 2004).

Construct 1 seems to align with Kelly's Individuality corollary as Esther demonstrates an idiosyncratic approach to categorising the elements throughout this section of the interview (Kelly, 1991).

Construct 2 may align with the Fragmentation corollary as the two ideas do not seem to link but are a representation of Esther's idiosyncratic views (Kelly, 1991). Construct 3 highlights the differences between Class 2 and the rest of the school; Year 4 were piloting an interest led curriculum. The construct aligns to the Construction corollary as it enables Esther to predict the school day events using her experiences (Kelly, 1991). The interpretation of Construct 4 by Esther links to the Organisation corollary as she is able to use her knowledge to predict and organise her constructs. She does this in an idiosyncratic way which links to the Individuality corollary, which may be due to the lack of homogenous constructs compounded by her individual perspective (Kelly, 1991).

Construct 5 aligns with the Dichotomy corollary as it presents Esther's clear distinctions between relaxation time and work time (Kelly, 1991).

### *Conclusions*

*It is important to have break time to clear your mind so you don't feel stressed out and everything.*  
*Teachers are kind of like friends you can talk to them about your worries.*  
*Friends help you get to school and be happy at school.*  
*Preparation and routine are the same things.*  
*It is important to prepare and good to know you have good friends.*

### *Esther's conclusions after reflecting on her grid*

Esther is a confident and thoughtful communicator, she expanded on the constructs to ensure we were both clear with her meaning. Esther feels that she belongs to her class and recognises its distinct nature from the rest of the school, even within the year group. Friends are important to Esther as is evident from her constructs. Esther's summary also corroborates her preference for routines and preparation balanced with time for rest and the need to "blank your mind". Esther's

Repertory Grid appears to present a balanced view of school; while friends and positive *Relationships* are of high importance to her, she also sees the need for independent work and routine. She recognises the impact of feelings on behaviour and learning and promotes the importance of rest in order to manage the demands of school (Aristotle and Reeve, 2014).

### Soraya

#### *The Topic (My School)*

I selected Soraya as she seemed to enjoy the opportunity to share her opinion. She presents unique views on school and the themes she picks up are reflected in her Self-Characterisation such as feeling rushed by adults and others being silly.

#### *Element Selection*

Soraya selected from elements all of a type which linked to events in the school day. They were elicited from the Self-Characterisations from both classes. In hindsight I would have liked to compare this with a free choice of elements.

<i>Emergent pole</i>	<i>Getting to school</i>	<i>Registration</i>	<i>Maths</i>	<i>Assembly</i>	<i>Playtime</i>	<i>English/reading</i>	<i>Lunchtime</i>	<i>PE</i>	<i>Reward time</i>	<i>Art</i>	<i>Implicit pole</i>
Always in a rush and I don't know how long we have	1	1	1	3	5	5	5	3	4	5	Relaxed, always running, playing, feel chilled, live your life
People focused and enjoy and quiet when need to be	4	1	2	5	1	1	4	3.5	1	3	People sometimes shout instead of singing, silly, chatty
Competitive but happy, no-one knows the point	3	1	3.5	1	2.5	1	1.5	2	1	5	People can be unkind about each other's work
Competitive	1	5	3	5	3.5	1	3.4	4	5	3	Never competitive, relaxed

Figure 30: Soraya's Repertory grid

### *The Ratings*

Soraya started using the 1-5 scale confidently, but then started using decimal points around the midpoint. It would have been interesting to change this and give her a 7-point scale to see whether this negated the need for the decimal points.

### *Construct Analysis*

Construct 1 appears to be a Core construct for Soraya and reflects ideas she presented in her Self Characterisation contrasting feeling rushed with a sense of autonomy and freedom (Jankowicz, 2004). Construct 2 appears to be a Behavioural construct as it describes what people are doing at different times of the school day (Jankowicz, 2004). Construct 3 is an Affective construct as Soraya is describing how she and others may feel (Jankowicz, 2004). With Soraya's summary of Construct 4 she identifies the impact that not having basic needs met can have on behaviour. This is an Attributional construct as Soraya offers reasons for the behaviour of others (Jankowicz, 2004).

Construct 1 seems to align with the Dichotomy corollary as the idea of feeling rushed seems to crystallise and clarify Soraya's desire for freedom and autonomy (Kelly, 1991). The desire to predict the behaviour of others suggests that Construct 2 aligns with the Sociality corollary (Kelly, 1991). Construct 3 aligns with the Fragmentation corollary as it is not predictable in line with a number of Soraya's constructs which in itself suggests a consistency in its unpredictability (Kelly, 1991). Soraya's reflections on Construct 4, may suggest that it aligns again with the Fragmentation corollary as while her first conclusion around people pushing at lunchtime seems linked, her subsequent conclusion of not wanting diabetes seems tangential (Kelly, 1991).

Soraya presents the adult constraints on her and others and contrasts this with times when she feels relaxed and free. When Soraya is talking about Art she names the notion of Flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) and acknowledges its importance as a time she can express herself freely. She seems to start to identify with black as representative of her life, but tempers this by describing how it goes with bright colours.

Soraya's summaries demonstrate insight into both her own emotions and the behaviour of others and identifies the impact that not having basic needs met can have on behaviour (Komenský *et al.*, 1910).



## Conclusions

*Live your life as a kid because you know how stressed your parents get  
Don't like assembly because of people chatting behind me.  
Reward time-sometimes people are silly and get told off.  
Art is like your flow- Miss Lawrence lets you do it rough or like sea, she wants it to be  
representative of you. That's why I like art. Sometimes I put black in because that's what my  
life is. Black is a trend-goes with anything, it goes with bright colours.  
I always get scared when people get told off.  
I don't like rushing.  
People are silly when they are bored.  
I don't like fights.  
People can be a bit judgey.  
Playtime people can be pushing "I can be stronger than you". Lunchtime is easier to get on  
because it's longer and they have eaten.  
I was fat in year 3. I don't want diabetes*

### *Soraya's conclusions after reflecting on her Repertory grid*

Soraya presents the adult constraints on her and others and contrasts this with times when she feels relaxed and free. When Soraya is talking about Art she names the notion of Flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) and acknowledges it as a time she can express herself freely. She seems to start to identify with black as representative of her life, but tempers this by describing how it goes with bright colours.

Soraya's summaries demonstrate insight into both her own emotions and the behaviour of others and identifies the impact that not having basic needs met can have on behaviour (Komenský *et al.*, 1910). Soraya talked about competitiveness but didn't mention learning, instead describing an environment where people are judgemental and unkind about each other's work. Soraya was not constrained by the homogeneity of the elements, she adapted them to talk about what was important to her. The constructs link with her Self-Characterisation demonstrating a constancy in her thinking. The constant theme throughout her Repertory grid was the desire for a less competitive environment and wish to not be judged by others.

### Themes generated by the Repertory Grids

Using the constructs to identify themes, Autonomy and Democracy were identified by the participants alongside Friendship, Learning and Passive Learning. This may have been skewed by four of the six participants being limited to elements pertaining to the school day. The themes identified also link to the Protective factors identified by (Henderson and Milstein, 2003) in line with the themes identified in the Self-Characterisations.

#### **Democracy and autonomy (Meaningful Participation)**

You're just listening, not interacting..... More your decision and input.  
Listen to what you can do, then do-your decision..... Told to copy something-you don't choose.  
No choice to do anything-do as you are told-no option..... ..Don't do anything, sit and listen.  
Get out and do something-have choice..... Told to copy something.  
Learning..... Having time to be.  
Learning something..... Being free-not having to be really sophisticated in what you are doing.  
Free-do what you want with friends..... Lesson.  
Everyone free to do what they want..... Listening to someone altogether.  
Using books to write down information..... Do the things you want, free time, fresh air.  
Always in a rush and I don't know how long we have..... Relaxed, always running, playing, feel chilled, live your life.  
Time to relax and talk to your friends..... Not time to talk-have to concentrate on work.

*Figure 31: Constructs grouped under Democracy and Autonomy*

#### **Friendship (Pro-Social Bonding)**

Free-do what you want with friends..... Lesson.  
Friends/human based/friendly..... Mostly by yourself. Independent.  
School routines-only happen at school.... You can have friends in and out of school/ not just about school.  
Children and friends really important-if you are sad it can affect your work..... Time to rest your mind-sometimes to rest and sometimes to talk.  
Time to relax and talk to your friends..... Not time to talk-have to concentrate on work.

*Figure 32: Constructs grouped under friendship*

#### **Learning (High Expectations and Clear, Consistent Boundaries)**

Out of school getting fresh air ..... In school learning.  
Not writing down learning, you are still learning for your future ..... Writing down learning-more useful.  
In school, getting refreshed, not learning ..... Haven't learnt anything-not in school.  
Learning ..... Having fun.  
Learning ..... Having time to be.  
Learning something ..... Being free-not having to be really sophisticated in what you are doing.  
Playing but with routine..... Work-more doing in class.  
Free-do what you want with friends..... Lesson.  
Getting taught how to do it ..... Not in school waiting.  
Using books to write down information..... Do the things you want, free time, fresh air.  
When children have a break and a snack. (set times. Basic needs) ..... Learning based.  
Time to relax and talk to your friends..... Not time to talk-have to concentrate on work.

*Figure 33: Constructs grouped under learning*

**Constructs grouped according to the school values**

The individual Repertory grids, while expressing idiosyncratic views, identified and supported a number of themes which had arisen throughout the research using the different methods. I attempted to group the participant's constructs under the headings of the four values, however it became apparent that it was difficult to identify clear links between the constructs of the participants and the school values. The Repertory grids generated stories around the process and business of the school day, and appear dominated by the notion of choice and autonomy. It may be that as 6/8 rep grids were with the school based choice of elements, this may have resulted in the more process based constructs. Alternatively, it could be that the values are an inherent part of everyday life, and that the children do not ruminate on them as they are embedded into their everyday life. The children did, however, highlight a number of issues of importance to them, it appears that these are the values they have developed themselves as advocated by Dewey (1975) rather than through a values transmission model as promoted by Lickona (1996).

## Chapter 7

### Conclusions, Reflections and evaluations

In this chapter I present the key findings and the issues of importance to the children, their central themes. I reflect on my contribution to knowledge, my learning through the project and the limitations of the research. I consider possible research directions and make recommendations for practice.

#### Key Findings

- Children come to school with their own values
- The school values are not necessarily adopted by the children; they maintain their own and apply these to situations
- Children want adults to be consistent in the values they promote, whether the school values or their own personal values
- The children demonstrated evidence and awareness of resilience
- Democracy and autonomy are of high importance to the participants
- Children are able to use PCT approaches which are adapted appropriately

The children in this study were able to articulate their values with the variety of methods provided to them. They appeared to understand and interpret the school values through the lens of their own values. This demonstrated that attempts to replace their values rather than build on their existing values were ineffective and not the best way to develop moral citizens. This is not new knowledge, but has been lost from a broad, historical discourse; Comenius (Komenský, 1910) was writing in the 17<sup>th</sup> century about the importance of the practical enactment of moral behaviour in order to enable children to develop moral thinking and to become moral beings. The overwhelming message from this research, both through the literature and the data, is the ineffectiveness of teaching character education/moral education/values education through a didactic approach (Carr, 1997, Dewey, 1975, Komenský, 1910). The participants demonstrate values they have learned through positive experiences and relationships and express a preference for a democratic learning experience (Komenský, 1910; Dewey, 1975; Carr, 1997).

Relationships have underpinned this research. The school was selected due to the Head Teacher who views relationships as fundamentally important, and, although no longer in post, this ethos was maintained within the school. The research question was triggered by a child who viewed his relationship with the Head Teacher as one where he could question the way the values were being used negatively by adults. I worked with the Head Teacher to develop the research as the result of a

trusting relationship and shared values (not necessarily the school ones). I worked with the class teachers who were of a similar mind-set and developed relationships with them over the year, using their ideas for the research design and supporting them in the classroom weekly. The time spent with Year 4 enabled me to build positive relationships with the children resulting in a strong sense of loyalty towards them and their stories.

The data showed that the children were also concerned with relationships; with their parents, school staff and children. The Self-Characterisations identified interactions with these significant role models while the values group work provided enactments of the school values, all of which were exemplified through relationships. Each of the Repertory Grids identified relationships as a core construct with Austin viewing them as 'essential building blocks of the school'. Comenius identifies the importance of relationships in schools in the development of the moral being and a nurturing approach as essential in allowing a child to develop positive values (Komenský, 1910). While Kant (2001) appears to view the teacher's role as that of teaching them how to think, the moral actions he describes would be exemplified in a relational way. Dewey (1975) echoes this, presenting the idea that values and morals can only be developed in a social context, one of the central themes identified by the participants in the research.

In this research the children suggest that while teachers present the school values, the actions of adults do not always reflect the values they promote. The children present times when they feel adults are disrespectful, both to their personal preferences and to their religious beliefs alongside positive representations of relationships with staff who enact the values identified as important by the children rather than the externally imposed school values. The children's responses reflect values which were important to them which link directly to theories of learning and resilience. The values identified were informed by their experiences, so were more relevant to their school experience and more in line with the values held by their teachers. The transmission of the school values is through a top down approach, requiring the children to accept and adopt the values, agreed by a group of adults (Dewey, 1966), unquestioningly through 'blind conformity' (Carr, 1991). However, the children also describe positive relationships and democratic approaches demonstrated by their class teachers which align with a values clarification model.

Central themes that reoccurred through the research were relationships, autonomy and democracy. The children embraced the research approaches, sharing their opinions and thoughts about school in a way which represented them as recognising that they had a voice. This suggests that PCT promotes a democratic way of listening with the participants in control of what they share, how they share it and the methods of recording their views. Throughout the Self-Characterisations, the children

shared times in the day when they felt they had autonomy and noted the times when their autonomy was curtailed, either directly by an adult, or by the school procedures. The values groups described the way adults were positioned to decide whether children were following the expectations set by the values using an authoritarian approach rather than the more preferable democratic approach. They also highlighted the issue of fairness where children and adults used the values as a form of control; demonstrated by adult's insistence on forgiveness and children using the value to get out of trouble. The theme of autonomy came through when discussing Hope with children aligning it with the ideas of self-motivation and perseverance. All the participants in the Repertory Grid work identified autonomy and democracy as constructs using terms such as 'free in what you do' and identifying the need to work independently.

Throughout each of the data collection stages the children demonstrated evidence of resilience; in the Self-Characterisations this aligned with the six protective factors which lead to resilience, identified by Henderson and Milstein (2003):

- Provide caring and support
- Set and communicate high expectations
- Provide opportunities for meaningful participation
- Increase prosocial bonding
- Set clear, consistent boundaries
- Teach life skills

The values group work enabled the children to provide examples of when they had to be resilient, such as when falling out with friends and managing conflict. They used phrases such as 'never give up', cautioning against 'bad mind thinking'. The participants approached the Repertory Grids with resilience; despite the process being unfamiliar, all engaged and embraced the challenge. The children's summaries of their grids identified the protective factors, such as enjoying challenge, support from teachers, school routines, the importance of independence and choice and relationships. I view PCT as an effective approach and method for eliciting participants' stories. The outcomes of the research demonstrate that children of this age can engage with PCT given appropriate adaptations.

Children arrive at school with their own values and maintain these. They may incorporate school values into their own value system as a result of their experiences, not simply by being taught about them but through positive relationships. Children are often overlooked and denied opportunities to contribute; engaging with children using this approach can develop agreed values which are more representative of children's views and experiences in line with the UNCRC (UNGA, 1989).

### **Contribution to Knowledge**

There has been a notable lack of pupil voice in the area of values education; the development of children's values and morals is evidenced throughout the literature with children as objects of research (Greene and Hill, 2005). However, there appeared very little research which asked children about their values, and even less which asked children about their perceptions of externally imposed values, reinforcing the idea of children as passive recipients of adult's values rather than experts within their own worlds with their own moral codes and values (Emond, 2005; Hill, 2005). This research has enabled me to hear the children's voice on an aspect that has not typically taken their perspectives into account. The clarity of the children's articulation regarding their personally held values suggested that attempts to replace these rather than build upon them were both futile and dismissive of the children's carefully considered and well-developed moral code.

Through the development of this research, I tailored PCT to work with children so they could do it in a non-formulaic way adapted to utilise their strengths and also to address this gap in PCT methodology. Using Kelly's (1991) techniques to find their truths about school, as a researcher rather than a psychologist enabled the children to voice their ideas in a way that other techniques had not elicited. The children shaped the research throughout. The research question was as issue raised by a child, the children chose the way they wanted to record their data and suggested alternative ways they wanted to do this. The values group work and the RGTs used the children's analysis of their data by asking them to look for the patterns and themes, checking in with them that my interpretations were accurate.

I found PCT to be an appropriate and effective way to generate children's constructs about the children's school experiences and their values. Whilst I acknowledged the complexities of the approach (Fransella and Bannister, 1977), I felt it important not to underestimate the ability of the participants to contribute in this way with appropriate adjustments made according to the individuals. The Self-Characterisations were adapted minimally. I provided an example to scaffold their ideas, and gave them the freedom to represent their day at school using pictures, comic strips or in the more traditional third person story format. Participants were able to dictate their stories to adults, or for adults to annotate their pictures as directed by the children. The values group work took Kelly's (1991) approach of exploring each participant's range of convenience around the values and adapted it to ensure that every child who wanted to was able to participate. I devised a process using the dyadic procedure (Fransella and Bannister, 1977) which took each value as an element, enabling the children to clarify their definition of each value through their understanding of its opposite. The RGT sessions were adapted from the original procedure in two significant ways. All of the participants were able to freely select elements, while two were able to select from elements

which were not of a type resulting in non-homogenous elements. The other way I adapted this process was by discussing the grids with the participants and asking them to draw their own conclusions, recognising them as having agency and being experts in their own worlds.

My research raises questions about the idea of consent and participation, acknowledging that the accepted practice of children only being allowed to participate if gatekeepers respond could be a way of silencing children and questions whether Gillick competency is an appropriate measure for social research. Adhering to the UNCRC, in particular Articles 12 and 13 would suggest that it is important to ensure children are able to participate if they choose to do so.

The use of multiple methods produced rich data; previous research seemed to focus on one method whereas I felt the use of multiple methods provided participants with multiple opportunities to contribute, enabling all pupils to contribute by finding the most appropriate method for them. The children responded well to the methods, seemingly finding at least one of the methods as an outlet for their voices which they had not previously experienced ensuring that all found an approach they could engage with.

The multiple methods, while generating extremely rich data, were at times difficult to manage due to the sheer quantity of data produced. The richness of the data in itself proved problematic as there were a number of themes raised which did not answer the research questions, but could lead to further avenues of enquiry leading me to recognise that not all data has to be used and feeling a little as if I had not communicated the participant's views fully. While resilience, democracy and relationships were the prevalent themes, I found the use of the Henderson and Milstein (2003) framework useful, but sometimes constraining because not all of the children fitted neatly into that framework.

Tailoring PCT to work with children, so they could do it in a non-formulaic way, meant that I was able to adapt it to utilise their strengths. I believe that knowing the children well and viewing them as active participants in the research enabled me to do this effectively. Using Kelly's (1991) techniques as a researcher rather than a psychologist to find their constructs about school, meant that common themes were identified viewing the participants as experts rather than in a therapeutic way.

### **What I Have Learnt**

For researchers to be trusted with the participants' truths, they must work to build a relationship with the participants over time (Emond, 2005). The initial interactions I had with the participants bore little resemblance to the research after a year of working alongside the children. The power imbalance between researcher and participants has to be constantly acknowledged and addressed,



and, sometimes, accepted (Hill, 2005). I struggled with the idea of informed consent as identified by (BERA, 2018); I felt that some children who wanted to participate were restricted from contributing by adults who did not return consent forms and felt that the children should have been allowed to decide on their participation. I had to try to lose my teacher identity and replace it with that of the researcher in order to address my frustrations and also to avoid trying to use the research to identify and solve individual problems or issues. As a researcher I recognised the personal centrality of an ethical and respectful approach to my co-collaborators and the problems this sometimes caused, such as being unable to use data to ensure participants were protected from negative fallout.

From a methodological perspective, I have learned how to use the Self-Characterisation and Repertory Grid techniques while adapting them to best meet the needs of the participants. I have gained the confidence to use the principles of PCT to develop adaptations which are tailored to the needs of the individuals. From a knowledge perspective I have been able to challenge and consolidate my own thinking on the ways children become moral beings and active citizens. This has strengthened my stance on the importance of a democratic approach in the classroom. While I have been aware of the political aspect of values education, this research has enabled me to recognise the endemic nature of this in the British education system, and to place this within the context of classical philosophy.

### **Limitations of the Research**

This research cannot make claims to broad generalisability, as by its very nature, the processes would have to be adapted to meet the needs and strengths of its participants. Thus, trying to replicate the research would be complex and disingenuous. However, the principles of building relationships with the participants and developing a PCT approach designed for them, has been a key purpose of this research. Tailoring and adapting PCT based on knowledge of and in collaboration with the participants is the process of the research. Taking this ethos and approach further could facilitate schools to enhance and demonstrate the value of genuine pupil voice. The time taken to build relationships, which were central to the research; doing work of this kind is necessarily time-consuming, and may limit the capacity of other researchers to replicate the method.

However, the time taken reflects the nature of the research; each phase was carefully crafted as a result of my developing knowledge of the children and the school, in consultation with the participants, none of which could be achieved quickly.

The methods used proved highly effective in eliciting children's perspectives, views and stories. Evidence for this is the continued desire of children to participate in the activities. Not all of the

views were relevant to this research and therefore I have had to omit them for this report. I felt that this was a limitation on my ability to report the full richness of the data and the children's voices. In order to accurately represent this experience, I would like to write this up more fully elsewhere.

### **Future Research Direction**

This research has been able to address specific research questions for the purpose of a specific school and methodological context. Further research would be useful, possibly as a comparative study in schools which adopt a purely didactic approach to developing children's values alongside a more democratic values clarification model in order to test the findings of this research. The PCT methods may have to be adapted to meet the needs of the individual children, but, for the purposes of comparison, there would have to be commonality in the approaches for both settings. Exploring the teachers' views alongside this would also give a fuller picture of the way values are learnt; using more teachers in the study would mean that they were less identifiable and that confidentiality could be more easily maintained. I would like to use the strategies developed in this research to explore the values held by children at the beginning of their school careers and those in their final two years of formal education; an all-through school compared to separate primary and secondary schools could help to explore whether length of time living with set school values has any impact on the personally held values of the children.

One of the limitations of a PCT approach is the apparent complexity for younger children (Pope and Denicolo, 2001). I would like to combine the Self-Characterisation and Mosaic approach to explore children's experiences of school, providing children with a camera to photograph their school experience (Cooper and Kellett, 2017). This would enable the children to share the things they value (and dislike) about their school day.

Using PCT methods, I would like to further explore the effects of a character education approach on the values of children and staff and the impact on conformity and inclusion.

### **Recommendations for Practice**

Children develop their values through their lived experiences, role models, positive relationships and bring their moral codes with them to school when they join in the Reception year (Halstead and Taylor, 2000). Having a significant adult, which could be the teacher, who cares to get to know them, encourages them when they make mistakes, sets high expectations for them, helps them to develop positive relationships and to manage conflict effectively while giving them opportunities for

meaningful participation provides children with the experiences they need to develop their own moral code and values. These positive experiences build resilience which in turn gives children the stability and consistency they need to develop their own values and to accept that others may have different experiences to them and may as a result hold different values (Dewey, 1966). The fundamental ingredient in children developing values lies with relationships; positive relationships which enable enabling children to develop positive values, while negative relationships result in children who view dishonesty, unkindness and a lack of respect as the norm, both in accepting this from other people and as a template for how they treat others. Current initiatives seem to take the view that children have something wrong with them which can be fixed by a didactic initiative which teaches them the appropriate character traits to cultivate and values to hold (Kohn, 1997). What this transmission model fails to acknowledge is that, for some children, it is not safe or appropriate for them to hold these arbitrary values or character traits. For example, the children in the study note the times when honesty has not served them well, and also when they felt that enactments of forgiveness by adults were not evident. Telling a child to forgive when they are isolated by others can act to reinforce their feelings about themselves as somehow unworthy of others' respect and an acceptance of unacceptable situations.

While children from within this study generated values which appear easily adoptable by the school they belong to, there may be variations in values due to the children's own individual circumstances, relationships and experiences. Negative or neglectful relationships may result in children developing values not conducive to a positive and collaborative school experience highlighting the importance of high quality early support (Bowlby, 1997). There is a need for early entrants into the school experience to be given the opportunity to develop their values through support from positive and reliable role models who provide appropriately scaffolded exploratory play and learning experiences using a values clarification model in line with the best Early years' and nurture group practice (Boxall, 2002). Central to the research is the idea that children come with their own values, but do integrate the teachers personally held values rather than the school-imposed values into their own values system. This highlights the essential nature of supporting trainee teachers to develop their own values and to have an awareness of the influence these values may have on the children they work with, as well as encouraging them to choose schools to work in which align with their own values.

The original intention with the research was to use the children's views to inform the school improvement plan, but the change in leadership meant that this did not happen. The research demonstrates that using the data in this way would enable the children to participate in the development of the school in a meaningful way. Using PCT to elicit pupil voice would be an effective way of ensuring pupil participation, recognising their agency.

Schools should adopt a critical approach to government initiatives (Knightsmith, 2019) and assess whether the latest idea has been independently research and evaluated (Allen and Bull, 2018; Jerome and Kisby, 2019).

The key message from this research for me is linked with Kelly's original concept, that of not underestimating the knowledge and capabilities of those we work with; of valuing the *man as scientist*, or child as scientist with the abilities to identify issues and provide solutions if those who work with them take time to create opportunities for them to do so (Kelly, 1991).

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## Appendix 1 Project Information Sheet



### Project Information Sheet

#### Who I am and my research

My name: Lisa-Marie Martin and I am currently working as a Senior Lecturer in Education at the University of Winchester. I have been a primary school teacher since 1994 and have worked in Portsmouth, Leigh Park, and Eastleigh as a class teacher, a year leader, an advisory teacher for behaviour, an inclusion leader and an assistant head teacher in charge of a resourced provision. I have been working alongside the class teachers, Miss XXXX and Miss XXXX once a week since September and have enjoyed working in Year 4. I hold a current DBS Enhanced Disclosure to work with children in school.

I am carrying out research into children's thoughts about their school using the four school values of Love, Honesty, Hope and Forgiveness as a starting point, after a conversation with Ms XXXX where we discussed how interesting it would be to find out the children's ideas about the values.

#### The Research aims to:

Explore what the children think about their school, also to talk about what the school values mean to them and how they see them in practice during the school day.

#### How I will carry out the research:

To ensure all children in year 4 have an opportunity to share their thoughts, they will write about a day in their school as they experience it. Following on from this I will be use interviews with four children to explore their ideas in a more comprehensive way. The children will be able to use discussion, drawing or writing to ensure they express themselves in the way most comfortable to them.

**Participation of the children:** As part of my project I will work with all of year 4, then select, using the children's writing with their class teachers, a small group of children. The discussions will be led by them, but will be focused on the school and their perceptions and beliefs held about their school.

As the person responsible for your child I am asking for your consent to allow your child to take part in this project. It is therefore important for you to understand and know what the project involves and what your child will have to do. Please take time to read the information on this sheet and to share this with your child. Please do not hesitate to ask if anything is at all unclear.

#### Results of the study:

The results will be entirely confidential and participants will not be able to be identified should any part of the work be published. If at any time you wish to see data collected and my findings I will be happy to show and discuss these with you.

**What will happen to the collected data?** All the data will have names removed or changed (anonymised) so that individual children or their school will not be able to be identified. All the data will be kept securely in a locked filing cabinet and in encrypted computer files until such time as I no longer need it when it will be destroyed. The data collected will be used for the purposes of this research project which will help the school to reflect on their values.

**What about the children?** The children will be fully informed about my work and reminded why I am in their class and school. They have the right at any time to say they do not want to be part of the project. They also will be able to work as they usually do in their class groups and with their class teacher. When undertaking interviews individual children can decide whether they wish to talk with me in pairs or in a small group or on their own.

**What about parents?** As the person who knows most about and is legally responsible for your child I would be grateful if you would provide written consent for your child to take part in the research. You may withdraw your consent and your child's participation at any time. If you require further information at any time please feel free to contact me at the email address below, or through your child's class teacher. In addition, on 8<sup>th</sup> June there will be a meeting at school after school where I will talk about the project and answer any questions you may have.

**Participation in the project is entirely voluntary and you and your child have the right to withdraw at any time.**

**Additional Information:**

My project has been approved by the Faculty of Education at the University of Winchester.

If you are unhappy or would like to discuss this study please contact either me Lisa-Marie Martin at the e-mail address below or The Faculty of Education, University of Winchester, Sparkford Road, Winchester, SO22 4NR.

If you require further information or wish to discuss any part of the project please contact me:

[Lisa-Marie.martin@winchester.ac.uk](mailto:Lisa-Marie.martin@winchester.ac.uk)

**If you require any further information, at any time, please do not hesitate to contact me.**

## Appendix 2 Participants' Self-Characterisations in full

Vicky

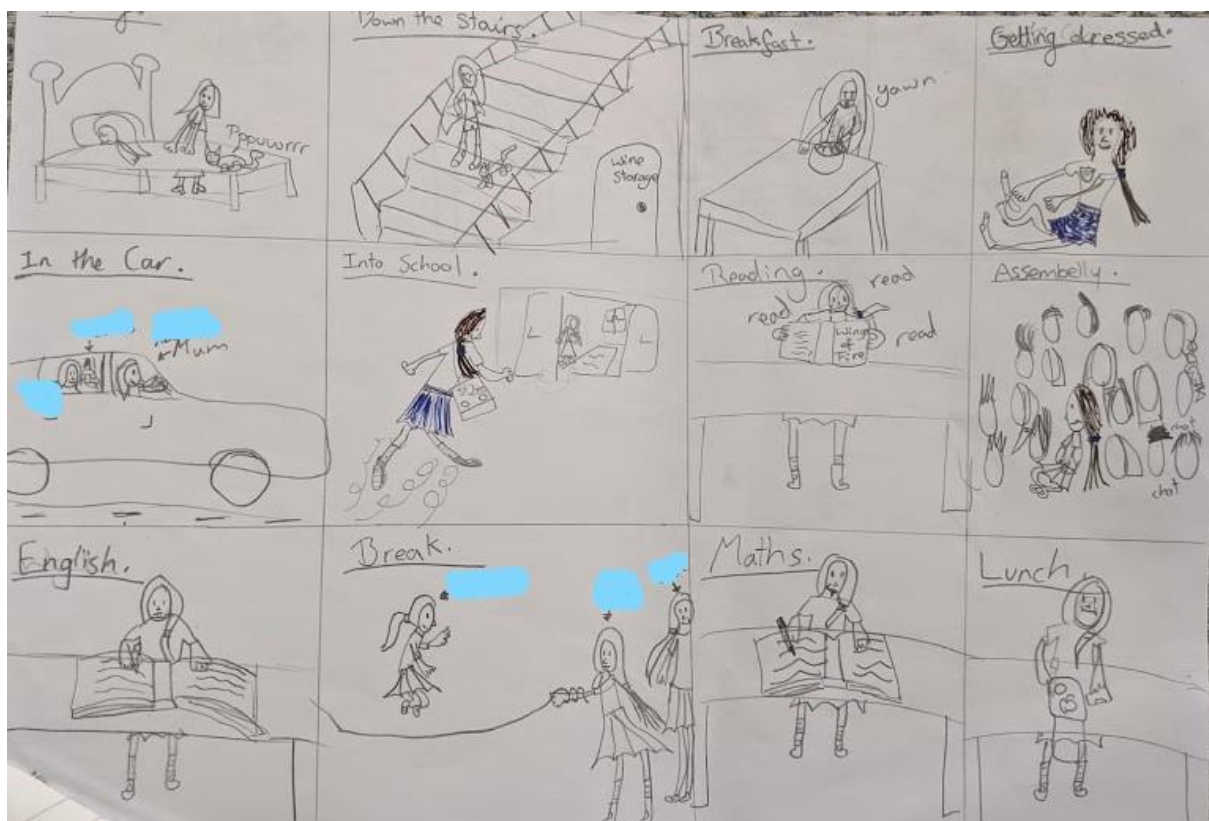
5 Day at Feb 5th

A Friday morning Yippee! :) "It's time to wake up..." Whispered mum as she forced her eyes open. "Oh, ok" she mumbled as she flopped out of bed. tumbled down the stairs with her cat circling her feet while trying to find her way to the kitchen. lazily poured a bowl of sugar puffs and gobbled them up twice as fast as she poured them. Now with a bit more energy, rushed up the stairs and flew on her school clothes, brushed her hair and cleaned her teeth, then strapped up her shoes and climbed into the car. mum drove down the road with two chattering children children children ( and her brother ) Hopping out the car, kissed her mum goodbye and hurried to school.

As she trudged up the stairs, she just remembered that they had art today and she loved art. Entering the classroom, sorted her equipment and sat down with her Higgs of Fine book and began to read silently. When's wonderful teacher Miss had finished the register she called out all the rows to put away their books and line up boy, girl, boy, girl for assembly. When collective worship was finished, and her class started english when it was 11:00 IT WAS BREAK TIME!!!! When break was over, and her class started english. After time had past and it was 11:00 the class did an hour of maths and then it was LUNCH!

When [redacted] name was called, she grabbed her packed snack-lunch and sat down with her BFF's and buddy [redacted] and [redacted] (and [redacted]). After lunch [redacted] and [redacted] couldn't find [redacted] so they played until the bell went and it was time to go in. When they sat down and it was time to start art, [redacted] handed out the art books and they all started to act arty! After an hour of art, [redacted] row was called out to get their stuff and line up for home time. And after waiting for the rest of the class, [redacted] class went down the steps and ran out to their parents. [redacted] said goodbye to miss [redacted] and went home with her her mum and brother.

Wow! What another <sup>fabulous</sup> ~~happy~~ day at [redacted]!





Hannah



"I am so tired" he muttered, as he lazily dragged himself out of bed. He slowly walked to the bathroom

- I think school begins too early because I feel fatigued!

And tried to squeeze the aloe-vera toothpaste out of the tube. He brushed his teeth and spat out the toothpaste, and felt as fresh as an ice-cold smoothie even though he hadn't washed his face. After he washed his face he ran downstairs (as quiet as he could) and stroked his cat. "Hi mum!" he happily said. Grabbing a drink of water, he thought what would the school day look like. He came back upstairs and put his school clothes on, grabbed his phone and flicked through Youtube seeing his notifications. He walked downstairs and put his shoes on.

#### The school run

Running to the car he sat in the back left seat and glared out the window. Dropping his brothers off, he felt a sudden pain in his tummy as he couldn't have breakfast (he doesn't have enough time because his school starts really early). As his mum dropped him at the holiday inn he said his goodbyes hoping she would have a safe and joyful day. walking in the spring sun, he met his friend as he walked with his brother. Having a good time.



#### School

Cheerfully, he walked up the long flight of stairs and put his belongings on his peg. His teacher (Miss. \_\_\_\_\_), Looking at the timetable he was in for a good day.

He carefully picked up his chair and hoped it would be a tall chair...but it wasn't. Marking his notes, miss. \_\_\_\_\_ stated that the register was starting. A few minutes later, they lined up for assembly. Assembly was quite boring today (it was about Hitler).

#### English

Today English was quite fun they looked at grammar. The boy behind him kept making disrupting noises. He thought about maths and the annoying topic of ...N...

#### Maths

The boy was quite upset as he couldn't understand the word problems. Miss. \_\_\_\_\_ was quite clear but things wasn't in his mind. He thought it was Friday but it was...MONDAY. He was annoyed at what he had thought and didn't produce any work. The teacher was quite upset at him so he had to stay in for...LUNCH.

#### Lunch

At lunch he had a Nutella sandwich and an apple. He didn't have that much lunch because he didn't have a big appetite. He had to do lunchtime catch-up because he missed maths as

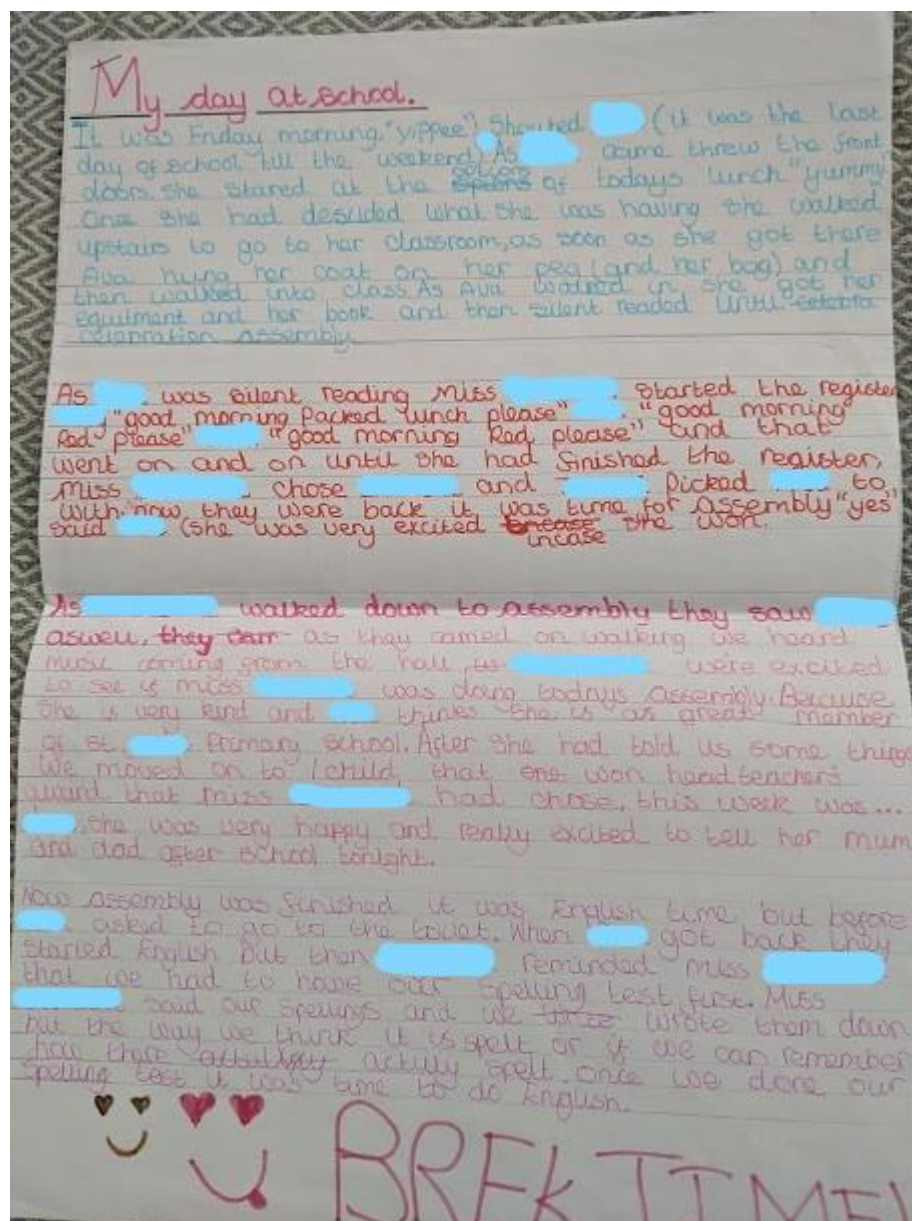
he refused to do his work. But then he understood his maths because he listened to his teacher.

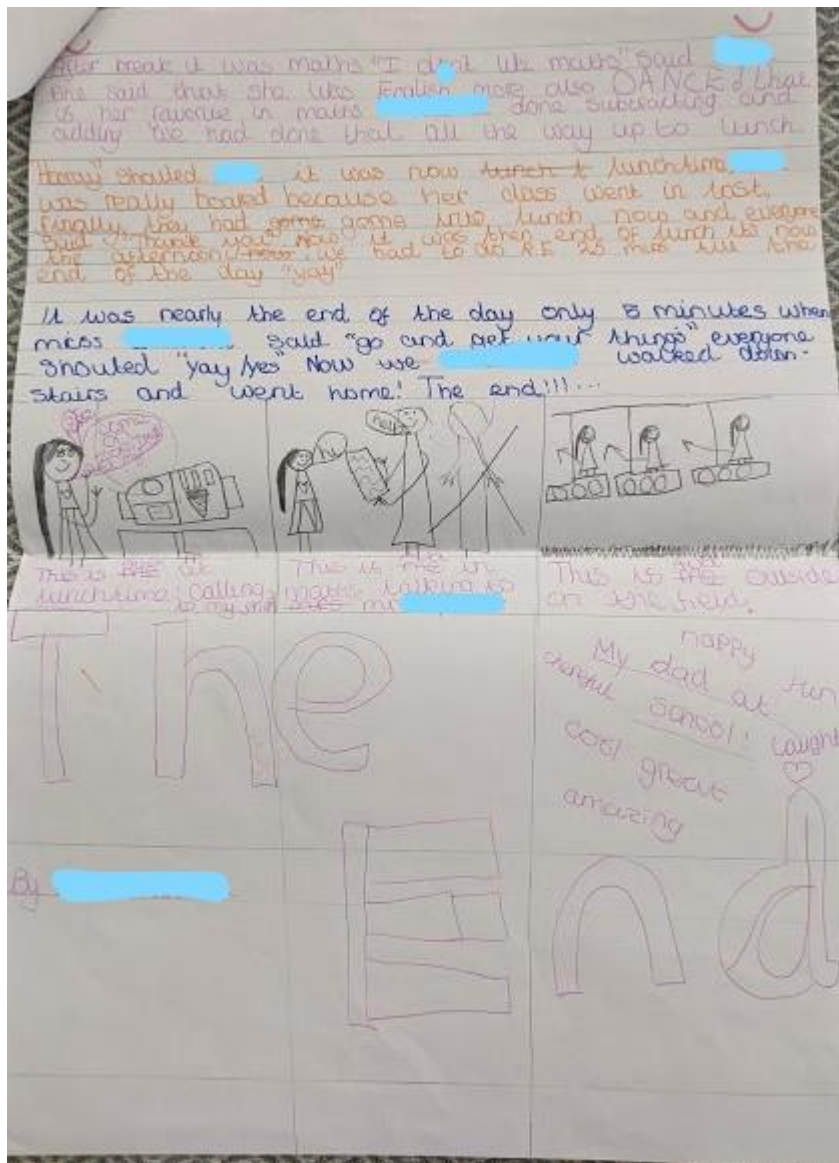
#### Art

Art was his favourite lesson as he got to do what he wanted to do. But it had to do with the topic of the lesson. This lesson he drew a traditional Greek myth pot and the teacher thought it was beautiful. We could sit with our friends if we wanted to.

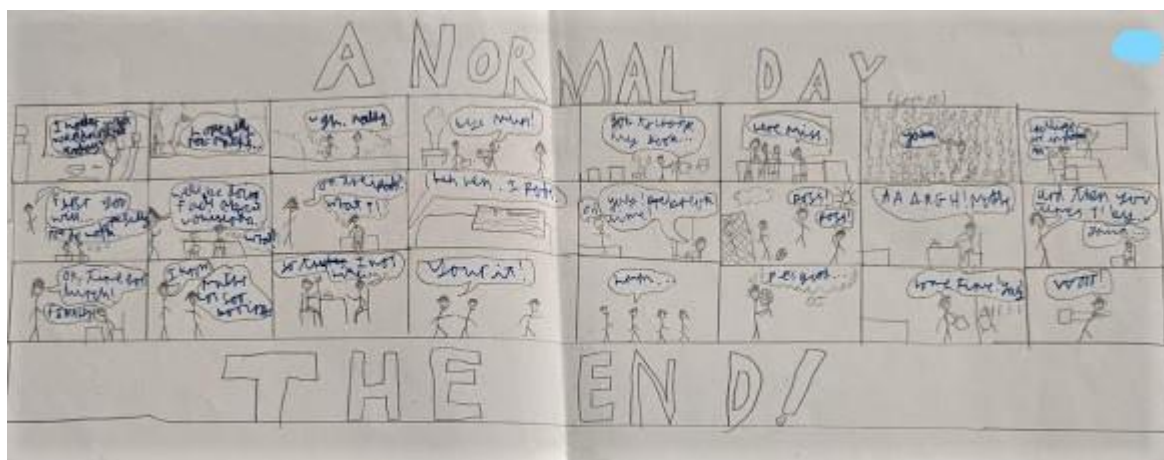
#### The end of the day

At the end of the day miss Leslie read a chapter of a story that was really factual.





Sam



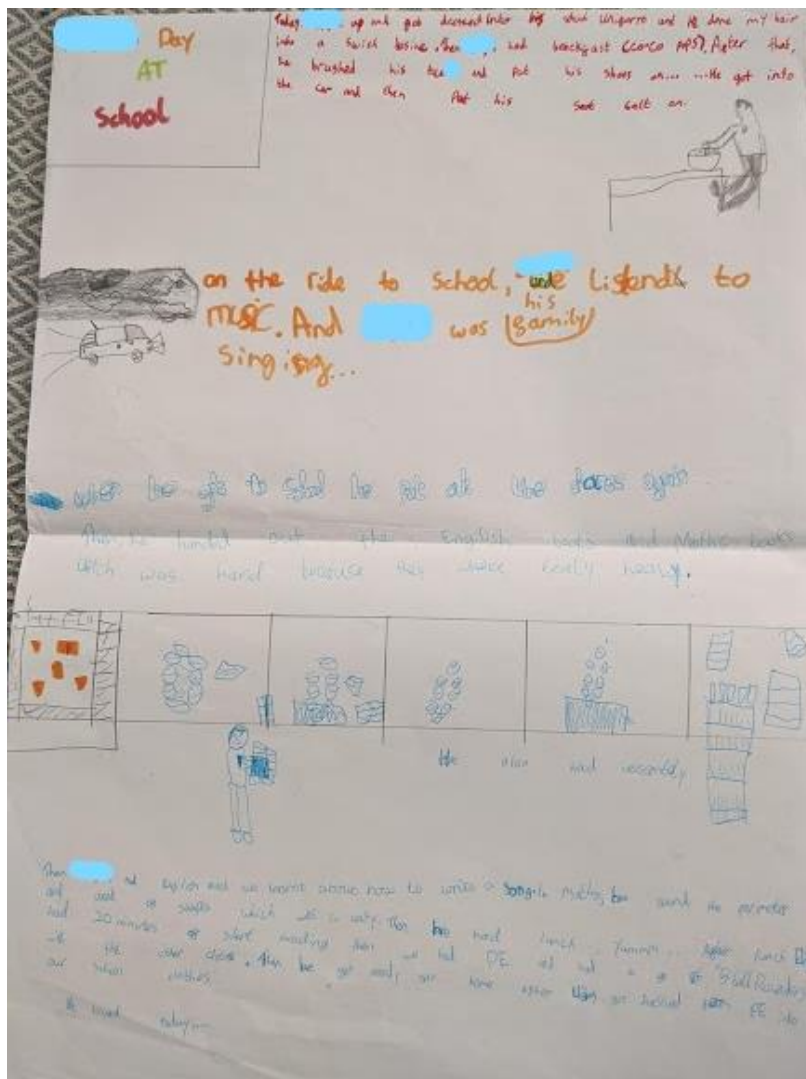


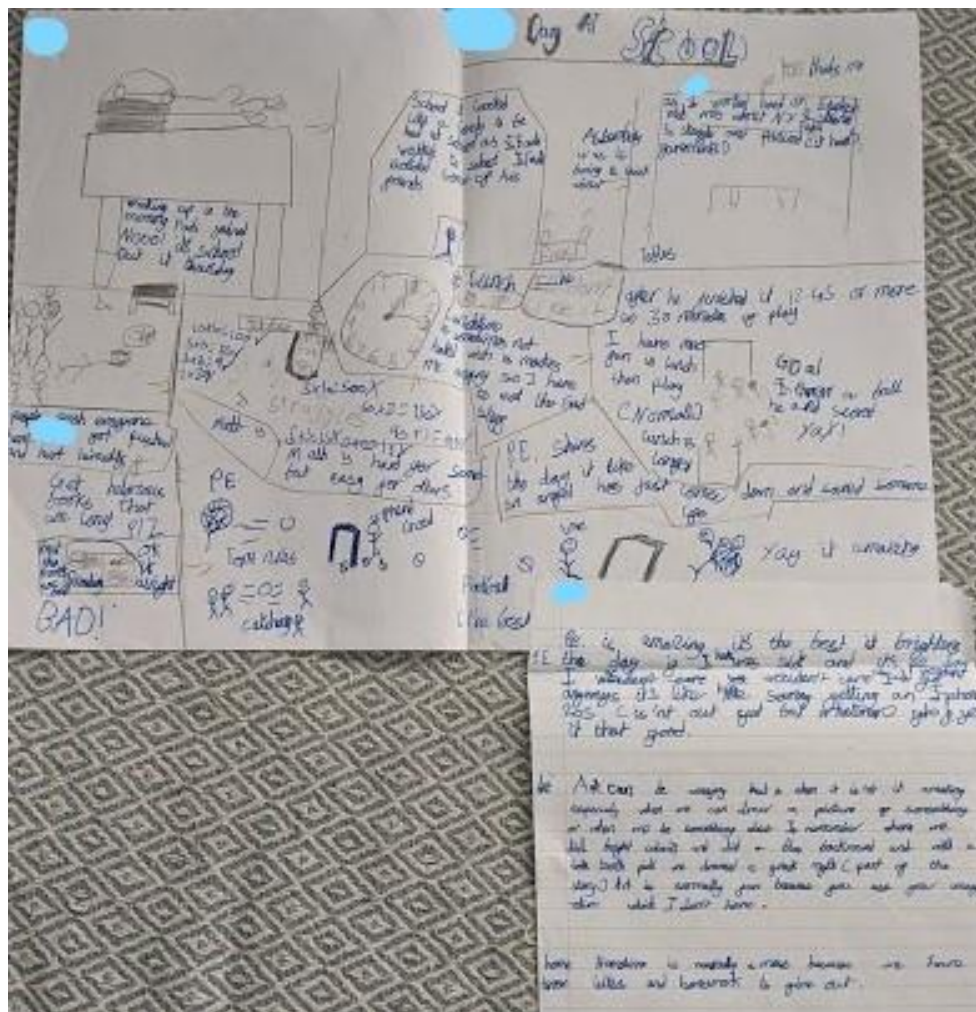
A DAY AT SCHOOL

"Hey Hay HEY!" shouted my uncles wotting brother. I was  
in the store. "Well now that your up you have to go to school"  
and watched TV until breakfast. Saw it was Friday.  
I wrote much. I left the house with his family and started riding bikes to school.

As we got to school and looked our bikes up and walked into class. I started reading my "Harry Potter book" until it  
was time to come back. After the assembly we started English. I had my Harry Potter book with me. I did good in English and  
break. I'm now having problem writing. What about you? The boy said "I don't know." I'm doing well and going to  
rockband. Womans please say a few words for their homework. I'm doing well as much as me. It's hard to give really well to show  
what I can do. I thought not at lunch play. I went to school and played with my friends. I like to go to school.

After the meeting we got changed for PE and went outside to play basketball. I didn't hit any good shots because the border there  
the balls were too far. My mom later PE we went back to class and started to get our things ready for home. I got his lunch





MY DAY  
AT SCHOOL

Approaching the school [redacted] curbside took on sheepish eyes, worry was over, and a big smile crept across [redacted] face and [redacted]. His Equipment then sat down and started to read. Also with a nervous where because it was Friday and [redacted] could win a headteacher award! Also [redacted] was a test today! We were lining up quickly to go to in assembly. Ben came down and started to listen [redacted] class where second to last so somewhere last. She (Mrs [redacted]) said "You have won a headteacher award".

As we left the assembly [redacted] instantly remembered he had a test so [redacted] his turning back on and started the test. When he got answers and [redacted] saw he had 30/30. It was amazing [redacted] jump in down [redacted] had got the marks.

Having got full marks [redacted] got a prize and carried on with his brilliant day. All of a sudden it was break time. He played tag with [redacted] and obviously [redacted] got like [redacted] because we was having so much fun. It was just madness. It then was having was

Waiting for doors and doors [redacted] finally got class and waited we didn't have much time. We had [redacted] and best of all we had [redacted] we did [redacted] and [redacted] and [redacted].

It was lunchtime [redacted] thought it a bit short but fun. We went in to do PE and it was so fun. We were playing football. It was the big match of the year [redacted] vs Kipling [redacted] was CF he scored then Daniel scored. It all down to a penalty kick. Daniel was taking and with rethink he hit it by corner. The best day of his life was over.



DAY AT SCHOOL

"Hurray!" shouted [redacted] "It is my favourite day at school!" She ran down the stairs and ate her breakfast quickly. She was ready to go to school! Initially, she walked to school. As she walked, she asked herself what she will do today.

When she arrived in class, the others were reading. After that, we did spellings. [redacted] did spellings ~~are~~ really hard! After [redacted] did English, [redacted] checked her work, passed and put one smiley face on the teacher. The English was really easy but still a bit hard! After it was break and she played with [redacted] and [redacted]. Sadly, it was time to go back in class.

Now, it was math time. We did some arithmetic work and area work. [redacted] likes arithmetic work because you are recapping what you already know. When we worked on the area, [redacted] wrote the definition as it Miss [redacted] gave her a 10/11 in with the correct [redacted] really like maths.

Now it was lunch and [redacted] was really hungry. When she ate her lunch, [redacted] ate it quickly. When not out to play, she played with [redacted] and [redacted]. Sadly, lunch time went quickly but just after there was PE.

In PE we played rounds. [redacted] really like this game. She started being a runner and she was amazing and did a rounder each time. When she was a gatherer, she tried to get a ball each time. [redacted] really likes PE because she likes running.

After that, we did the cake sale. The play place was so busy and I could go in! My mum bought a piece of cake and another cake which cost £1 altogether. At the end, someone told me that we raised £145.00 in total! It was a busy day and I was very tired that night!





Today [redacted] woke early because it was Wednesday he loved Wednesday because he plays tennis. [redacted] ate quickly his breakfast and he got himself dressed. He was ready to go to school.

[redacted] waited in his own town school. When he arrived at school he was happy because today they are going to learn music! Miss [redacted] was doing the register. Sadly there was no assembly but they were doing music. [redacted] loved it. It started snowing late it was already break time! [redacted] played tag with his two friends, [redacted] and [redacted]. Now it was time for Mr. Muthy + Mr. [redacted] favourite subject. After Math, I was thinking then [redacted] was put back.

After lunchtime, [redacted] did PE. [redacted] played Basketball with the boys and the girls were running. [redacted] is home now! He was happy because it was the end of the day! I was the happy and they were not.


After school, [redacted] played tennis, he needed strength because it was hard. Suddenly [redacted] fainted over his workbench. He decided to continue.

My Day at School!

After [redacted] watched a match of football France V. Albania. France won 2-1! He played outside with two friends called [redacted] and [redacted]. I was from so [redacted] ate his dinner, beans and potatoes. But it was late so [redacted] decided to sleep.

THE END





sitting down in assembly she was daydreaming because  
of how boring assembly was. After a while it was  
9:30 so she lined up to go upstairs to do  
some literacy and spellings. As soon as they got back  
upstairs they had to open their writing books and  
write the date and spellings. Miss [redacted] group had  
to line up to go to her class so they can  
do their spellings and she didn't enjoy spellings a lot  
because it was as boring as assembly was. They  
normally did spellings up to 9:45. Then Miss  
[redacted] group came back so they did literacy / Grammar  
didn't like grammar a lot but this  
time she enjoyed doing noun phrases and expanded noun  
phrases. She felt happier as the day kept going. It was  
11:00am so it was playtime and [redacted] rushed  
downstairs to get some fresh air. [redacted] didn't like play-  
times a lot because [redacted] weren't about to stay in side. After play  
time it was maths. It seemed really quiet. As they were  
going through their maths [redacted] found it easy like  
usual. [redacted] was just about to finish her last  
question until it was lunchtime. [redacted] liked lunch-  
times because Miss [redacted] would let her stay inside to  
do jobs or to stay inside eating. As it was 1:15  
[redacted] sat down in her seat so Miss [redacted] could  
pick up the class. In the afternoon they did science  
and were learning about living things and their  
habitats. Finally, it was 2:55 and they started  
to get ready for homework then [redacted] went home.



[illegible][illegible]

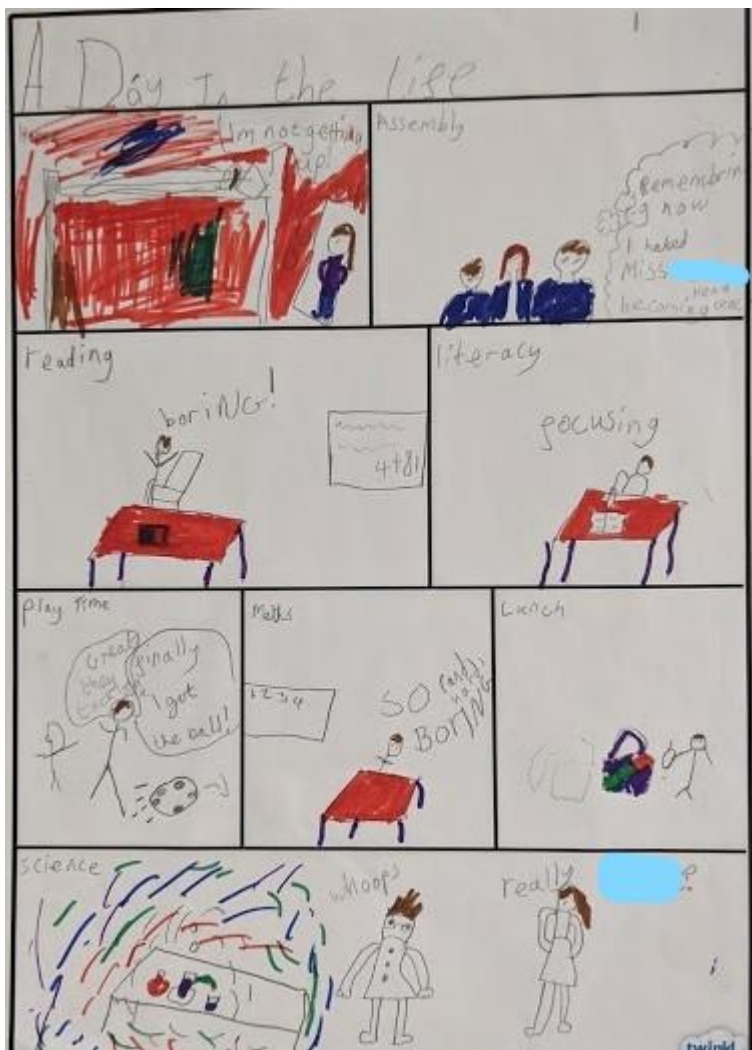
## Saffron

grinned today was Wednesday her favorite day of the week but today exelled. She got to wear her new Summer summer dress, for breakfast she had her usual and a cupcake! When she got to school she read her new neon book "6-Eldest" then unfortunately English, usually she hated it but today they were editing their explanation texts, she liked editing. ~~their explanation texts~~ At break time she mainly read her neon book. Then maths, she enjoyed maths but today was better they did Mental Arithmetic and did 71 questions and got 71 greens! "Yipes" screamed as she ran out to lunch "Shh" whispered year 2 were doing their SATs tests. Whiskered played the witch game but Sulked and it was egg-murder wrap got yellow and chocolate cake and custard and it was egg-cleared her plate and went and did the library like she did every day when she had finished, she read for a bit after lunch and then she finished writing their myths out really! and carried on then ginish. At the end of the day she told was this excuse to her mum about the day.

Ronan



Seb





My day at school

Entering the school

Approaching the school gates, I thought what would the day be like ahead of her, she knew that there was Ukaylie was really upset when she heard that her class wasn't doing tenorhorn any more especially because she was really good at tenorhorn and could play 'Mary had a little lamb' with out needing the notes. As the lady took <sup>me</sup> at the greeted her and she smiled thinking how lovely the staff were. She walked up the stairs and put her bags on her peg. Remembering to take the her books out she strolled into the class room greeted ~~me~~ by my favourite teacher Miss ~~2~~. I collected her writing and Maths book but quickly ~~to~~ putting back her English book because remembering (ohh yes!) that it was Ukaylie!

Assembly

and her class walked into <sup>the</sup> Assembly hall. It was a class assembly the only assembly she really enjoyed. It was class assembly. They read out a story from the bible and while the some children read it out other children act it out or switched slides on the screen. At the end that sang a song which was really catchy and song it in the line back to class.

**His** As [redacted] entered the class room she realised that it was Maths. Miss [redacted] stroled up to the front of the class and announced the it was division. NOOO [redacted] though, she hated division but that day she seemed to get the hang of it, first she got taught how to get the bus stop method which helped at ALOT.

**Break** [redacted] liked break but she just didn't like it when Miss [redacted] always called out to you to not hang around when someone just want to read. When [redacted] reached the safety of her friends. They played catch and then finally they all ran.

**Ukaylie (Music)** As [redacted] and her class waited in the Library to go into the Studio the [redacted] class passed by pretending to hold a Ukaylie and doing strumming patterns. In ukaylie we learnt a C minor and an A major

**Lunch** At lunch [redacted] excitedly rushed outside to <sup>talk up</sup> her friends about what might happen at the weekend. She thought how lucky she was to not be in the dinner hall. She preferred being outside because the floor wasn't cracked in left over food. In the playground [redacted] and [redacted] played with

maddie ball which nearly always gets lost but (CHURRAY) today it didn't!

**Art** [redacted] stared up at Miss [redacted] when reading section pulled to a close. "In Art today" Miss [redacted] said "We will be creating are pots today, we will have to do it like this!" and then told us how to do it. After she did that we <sup>they</sup> had paint handed out and crayons passed around. [redacted] got lots of compliments and that was how the day was ended.



[illegible]

My Day At School

"Oh no it's school" said while getting dressed on school. Approaching the car is my driver him to school. Seeing the school gates says in his head "this is going to be a long day as work". When he gets into school it says on the board "check your writing and maths books for any news or jokes. We which we don't like to do. Then when girls that he need until 9:00 am when assembly is.

assembly Walking to assembly,

assembly Walking to assembly, don't like assembly's because there too long and He has to sit on the floor. Assembly is over and now we're going back to class to do some English.

English In English was doing 4 corners on American. This lesson he was trying to find information about Louisiana. I got was if you supervised as a teacher with a pizza you get a \$500 fine and if you steal an alligator you get 10 years in prison. Lil Wayne the rapper was born in Louisiana and likes English.

Break At break, we would play handball and we really enjoy it. Our team would normally win because of me. We would sometimes play a throwing and catching game and when breaks over we do maths.

until lunch.

Maths In maths we have done perimeter and the sheet that he has on his hand and he didn't finish it. He kept on doing the sheet until it was lunchtime at 12:15 pm then we would give our sheets to the teacher and then went outside.

Lunch In lunch we had football and I was then playing striker. About 10 mins in I got a penalty because the goalkeeper tripped me up. I shot... and I scored and it was in the right top corner and it was 1-0 to us. But 5 or 10 mins later they scored and at the end of the match it was 1-1.

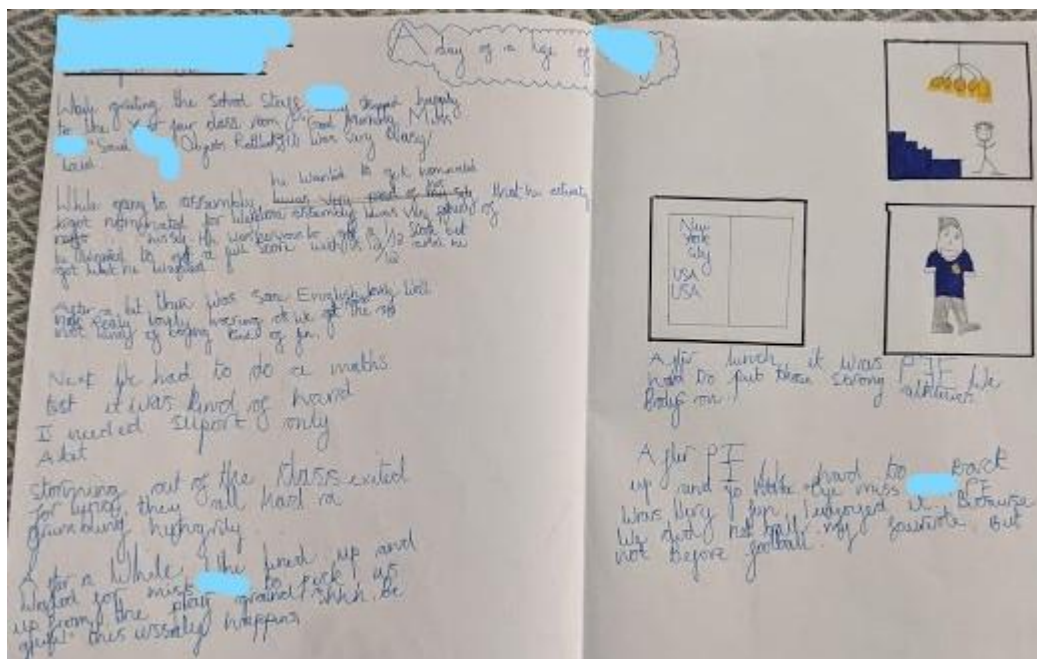
PE In PE we was playing rounders which is my 3rd favourite sport. I hit I did hit the ball the first round and I done a full rounder. Then we swapped over and was a fielder. No-one passed to him but he didn't score because he had run. After PE is over we get changed for then the end of the day.

End was getting changed and he got changed. Then the teacher & teacher gives out letters then we line up to go home.

Kelli



Majed





day at

Home → "Uhh!" said, as she slowly walked down the stairs. "What's up?" (dad) asked. "It's a Monday! The worst day of the week!" hated Mondays, as much as elephants hate mice. And she ~~hat~~ that Mondays hated her too. wanted to stay at home but knew she had to go to school, so from then she decided that she would rush through <sup>the</sup> whole school day so she wouldn't have to go through the pain. In a hurry she eat her breakfast and got dressed. The journey from school ~~to~~ home to school was a blur to her. In a flash, she was at school and putting her book bag on her peg. The only thing that was exciting for her was that she had the best lunch in the whole universe. Distracted by thinking of how bad this day was going to be, she called Miss ~~mom~~ mum and got really embarrassed about it. That made the day even worse ~~mom~~ for her. She quickly eat down and read quietly for roughly about half an hour. By that time ~~out~~ <sup>they</sup> had to go to assembly. "Uhh!" she ~~said~~ sighed, bored by the welcome ~~over~~ back assembly, but she ~~maybe~~ sighed at it too loudly. A teacher close to her ~~so~~ heard her and shouted at ~~me~~ the innocent (slightly) girl. As if an angel flew in and saved the day, assembly was finally over. Her description of assembly is - The lesson where you have to sit on a cold floor and watch and listen to a person talk. And that's what she think of what it equals - boredom. ~~From~~ She walked out of the hall feeling a wave of relief and calmness fill her. She wandered up to the classroom in anticipation, ~~English →~~ waiting for break time. ~~He~~ <sup>they</sup> she had a whole lesson about nouns, noun phrases and other ~~stuff~~ stuff. Finally, it was

ok → break time. + She made sure <sup>she</sup> didn't slow down so <sup>she</sup> could catch up with [redacted] and [redacted]. It's not like they ignore her, it's just that they are very fast. [redacted] rushed through the doors leading to the playground and excitedly jumped up and down as she came over to play catch with [redacted] and [redacted]. They had fun all day playtime, catching and throwing the ball like dogs. After the fun 15 minutes of playtime, the whole class went up to do another lesson. [redacted] hates that ~~we~~ <sup>they</sup> don't know what ~~we~~ <sup>they</sup> are doing. When she got

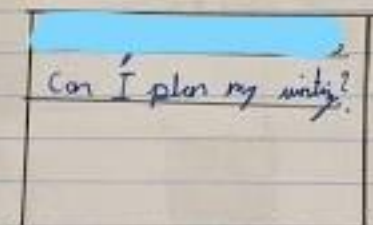
Maths → in the classroom, she found out they were doing MATHS (da da da)! She hated it! Absolutely hated it! [redacted] tried not to show the anger building up inside her as she sat down. Luckily, the maths they were doing was measuring perimeters, which she was good at so she calmed down. Maths was soon finished and it was time

Lunch → for lunch. [redacted] ran down the stairs with her lunch box in her hand, dodging people as she went. As she got onto the field, she opened up her lunch box and found pure glory. She had the best parents ever. She eat it all at once, giving herself a stomach-ache, hiccups and a stitch all in the same seconds. She didn't get much time to play and before she knew it, they were in class doing yet again, another lesson! As Miss

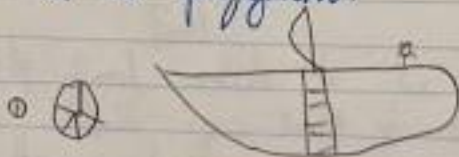
Art → [redacted] spoke, [redacted] fiddled with her hair, bored of waiting. Miss [redacted] finally announced that we were doing art but all of the boys went "Ohh". Art was really fun for [redacted] because they were doing designing for their peto pots (great design). She got through it really quickly and soon it was over. [redacted] got her stuff and went home. "Few, the days finally over" she thought and fell asleep.



He just went into assembly, and it is not very fun because they could make it more fun because when you are sitting in the cold floor, and he thinks people should come up to the front more often to be celebrated for what they did not make until Friday to be crowned. Just coming out of assembly and when you go out you have to start the lesson very quickly and there is not able of time to write nice and it looks scruffy and bad.



Play time is good but he would like it to be long because it goes so quick when you are out there and you can not play a lot. He thinks we should be allowed on the field at play time and have more stuff like tennis balls, footballs and other stuff. He thinks that we should have more tennis stuff in the playground.



## Maths

He like maths it is fun but some time it is very hard and he can not understand what miss [redacted] is doing so he get lost in maths and dose not understand what she saying / talking about.

## Lunchtime



He enjoys lunchtime it is fun and I would not change any thing about the lunch time it is fine and he like it also. Even though you don't get as long.

## Food



The food needs to be better some stuff to pick you self in stead of you have these choice and you pick get your food

## After noon

I like the after noon because we get to relax and it is not to hard.

So he thinks this was a good day and he enjoyed it.

"Z Z Z Z Z Z Z ! ! fast asleep dream-  
 ing - like usual, probably about food.  
 "Wait! Wait! had one of those dreams where you think you  
 falling but you not and you wake up. Then I heard the  
 bottle and rushed into the kitchen, checked the time on the  
 radio and made myself a bit of toast. It was 8:00 and  
 needed to get to school - quick!  
 "Morning mum." said as she <sup>handily</sup> poured tea out of the bottle.  
 She was dressed already.  
 "Come on we need to get to school!"  
 Mum, my sister, mum and dad hopped in the car and  
 we dropped my grandmother - sister of at her school and  
 quickly sped off to get  
 to my school. "Arrgh!"  
 parents couldn't find a space  
 to park in. Eventually  
 they had to drop me off  
 and disappointed into my  
 classroom just in time  
 for the register.  
 "Silent read!" boomed miss-  
 in her usual  
 teaching voice. We all did what we were told and took  
 out our reading books. and everybody in his class  
 went into our spelling groups. saw his friend and  
 called dibs on the chair next to him. (But a girl got there  
 before me.) Finally I English lesson came for an  
 hour and a bit. "great" (not). "Yes!" I just survived a whole  
 english lesson without dying! I rushed out and found  
 in the playground. "RING!" Breaks over.  
 Help me, going out of the classroom on his knees because  
 had nearly died from that maths lesson he had for  
 an hour. "Well I'm glad it's  
 Lunchtime!"



Carelessly I sprint to the front of the dinner  
queue. "Yes!" I'm first for once. With food in  
my belly we have half an hour break to play in.  
Mum and Dad talk about the new update on the  
Xbox 360. "RING!" "Come on, break is over already!"  
"Whoooo P!!!"  
"PEEEET!"

The class goes crazy because we get to play rounders



Finally the end of  
PE had come and and  
the final scores were  
5 - 3.  
"Ugggh." We always  
lose it's not fair.

The end of the day comes and the parents are  
picking us up. It turns out we have to walk home,  
because mum and dad couldn't find a parking space.






N O O O O O O O O !

Poppy



Florence

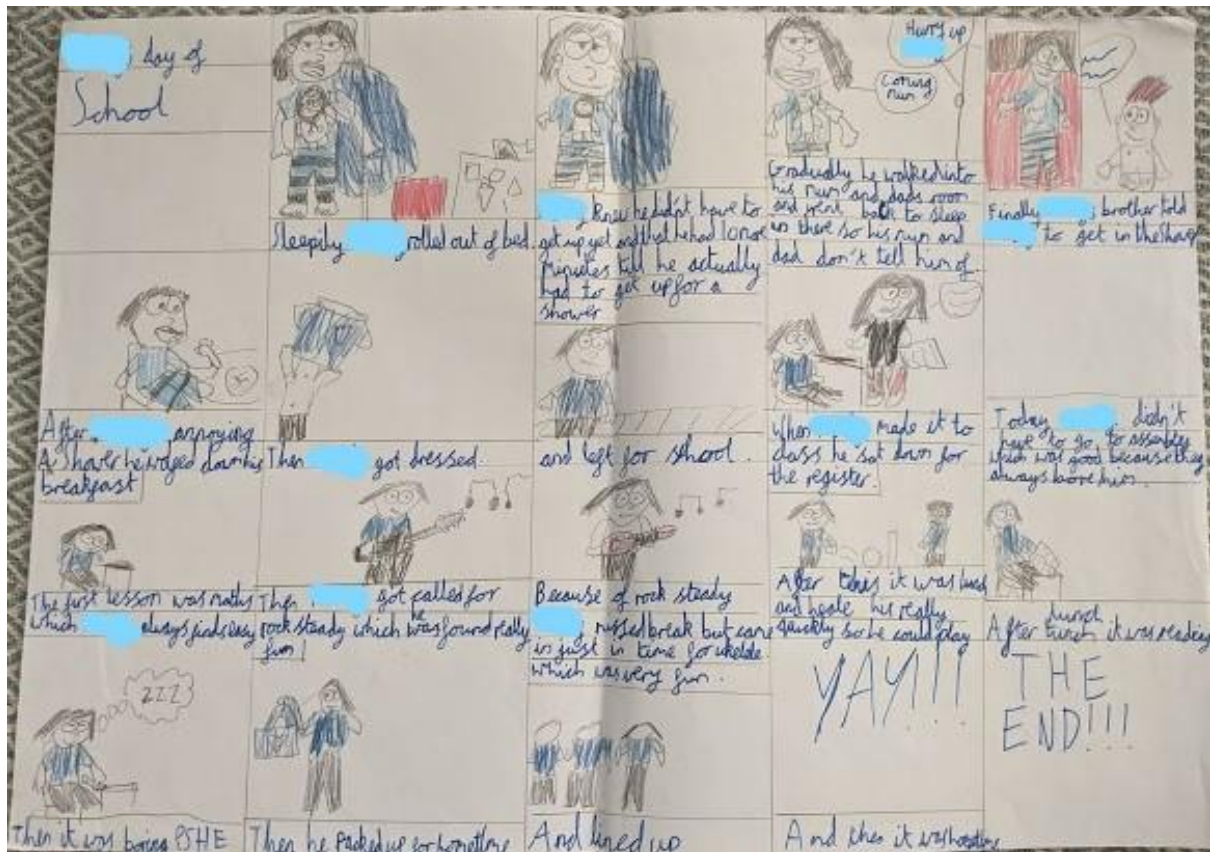


 In School  
 "Yay" Shouted  I'm here in School I am  
 just going in my class. I went in and I looked  
 in the board Miss  Said Practice your spelling  
 first I just put my lunchbox in the box then  
 after I got a whiteboard out ~~the~~ <sup>in</sup> box and a  
 a whiteboard pen out of the tray. Miss  was  
 doing the register and called out my name. I said that  
 I was Pocklunch. After my class and I went to  
 assembly it was ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~assembly~~ <sup>assembly</sup> and of people  
 got a headteachers award when the assembly was  
 nearly finished we done attendance cup another  
 class won it. We went back to the classroom  
 Miss  told that we are doing spelling test  
 I wrote the date and spellings Miss Leslie  
 was reading out the Spelling. She put it on  
 the ~~sign~~ <sup>sign</sup> System in my Spelling 10/10. We started  
 to do english we were learning about ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~system~~ <sup>system</sup>  
 after that it was Playtime I was playing with  
 my friends we were chatting and then after  
 we started maths.

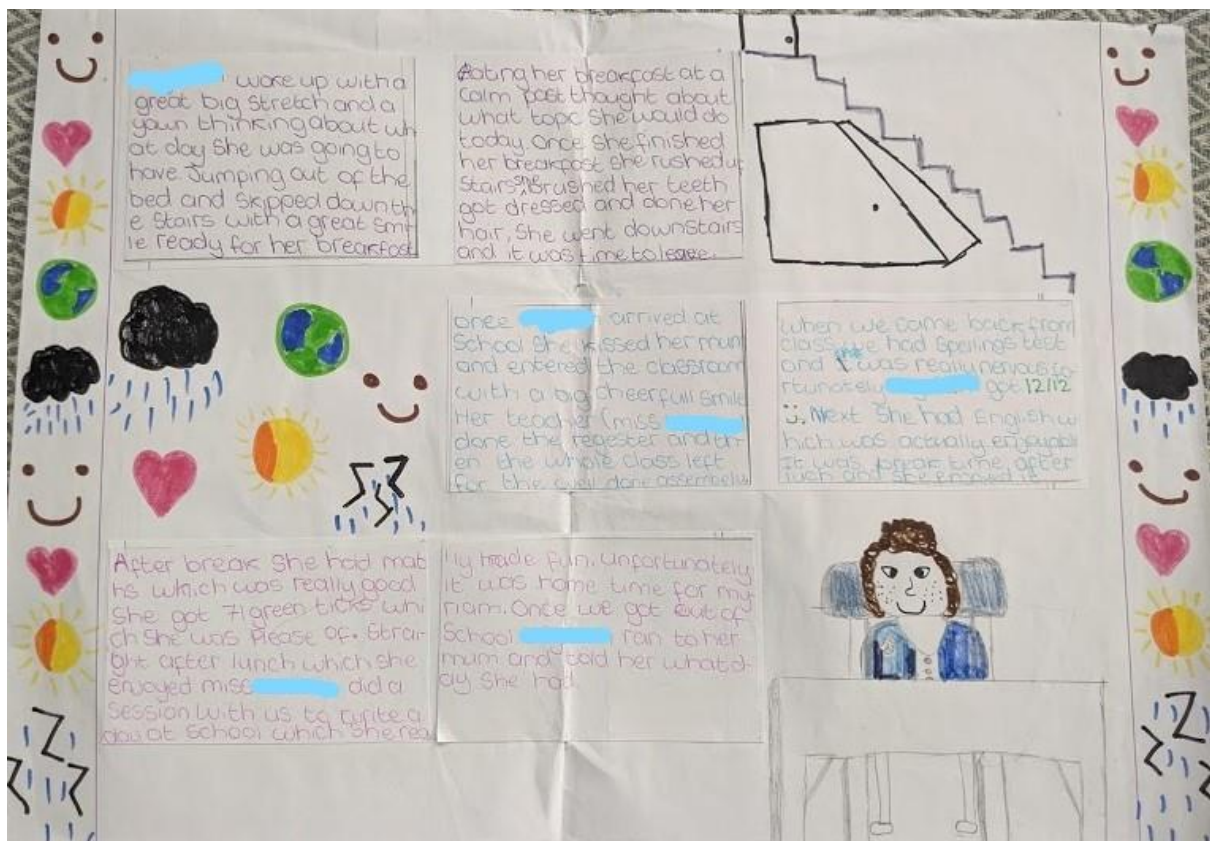


maths we were <sup>learning</sup> about division the hardest  
thing in my life I got some help from miss [redacted]  
then I understood about division when we finished  
maths it was lunchtime. In lunch I was playing  
with my friend the teacher called us over then  
we got our dinner After the dinner I went upstairs  
and went to my class and asked Miss [redacted] If there  
any jobs She said yes. She said you can sharp the pencil.  
When the class came Miss [redacted] Said Read your books  
So we did. Miss [redacted] was reading to people after we  
done some Guided Reading. we Guided Reading like drawing  
a disney character After that Miss [redacted] Said then  
we cleaned the classroom after it was finished  
we got the coats and scarves and hats then we walked  
down the stairs then <sup>we</sup> saw our parents and then  
we went home.

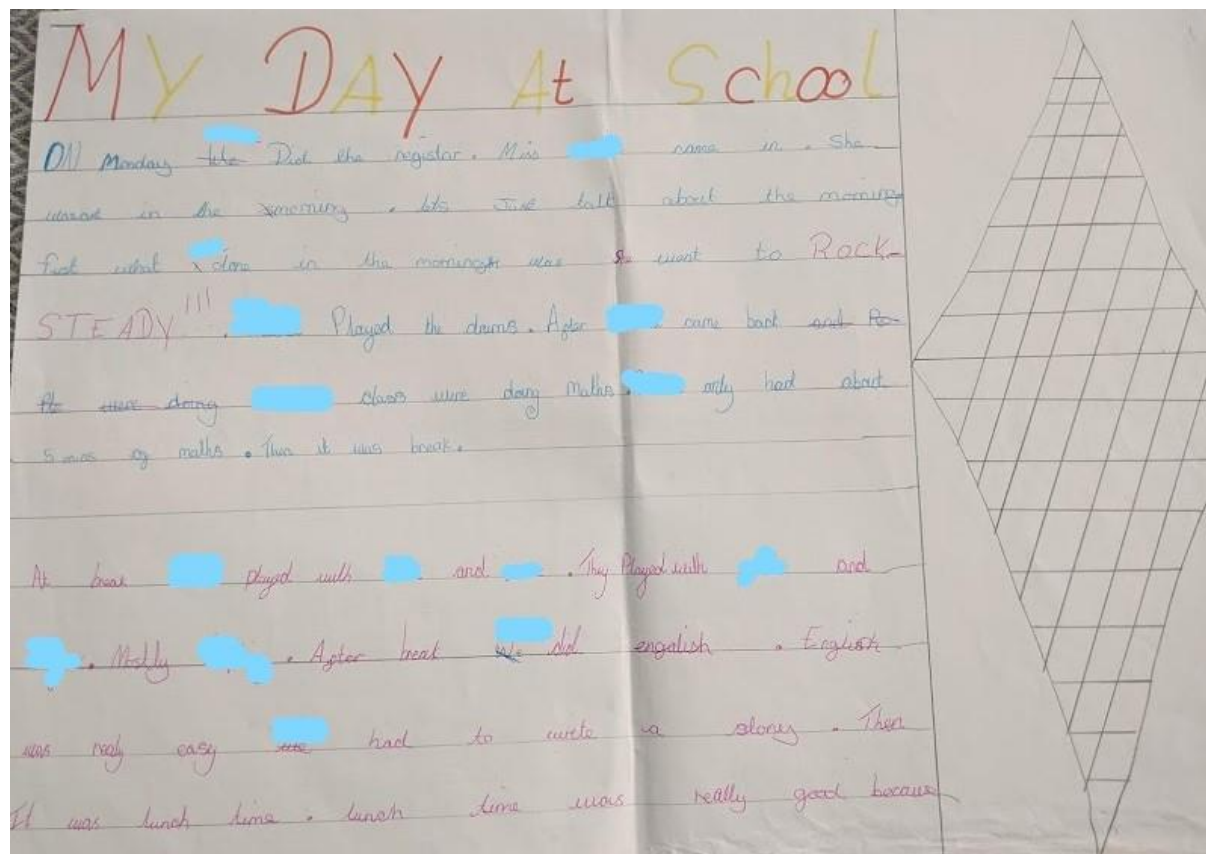
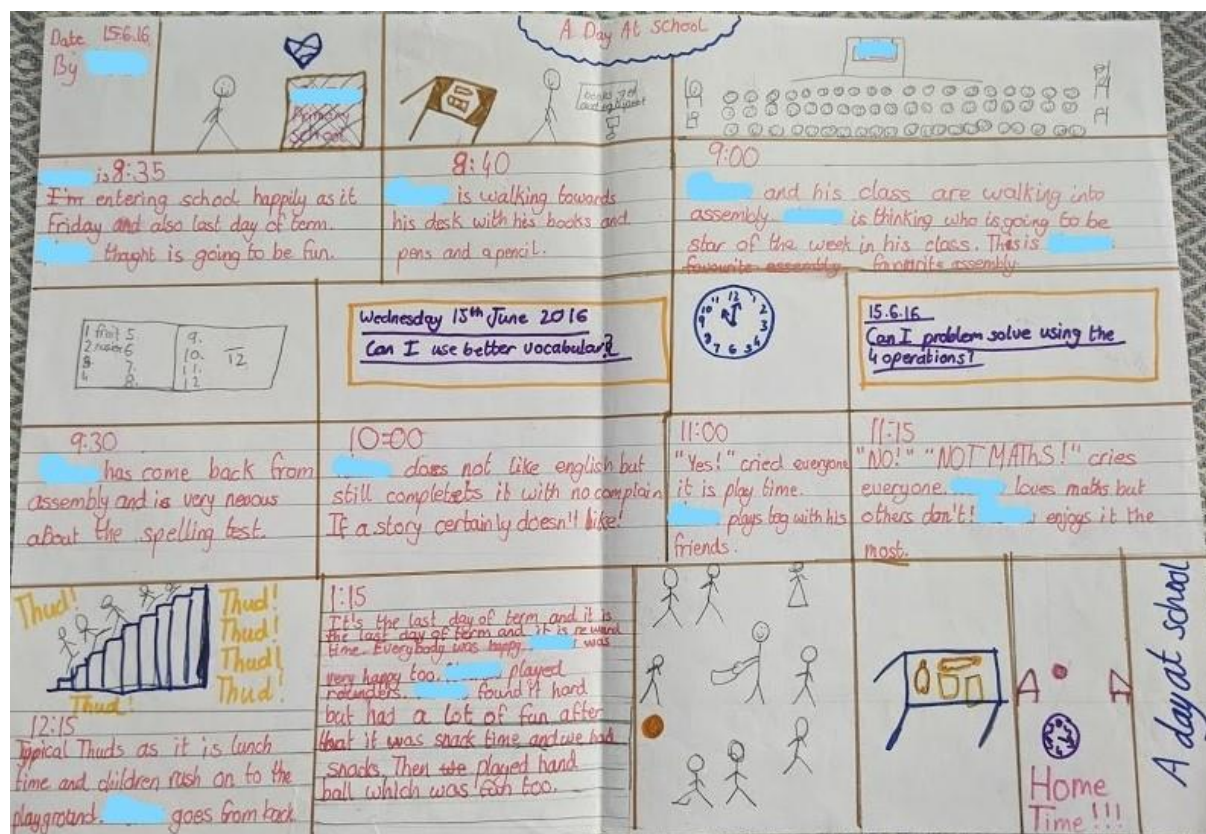
Ashley



Esther







You got to have nice Food!!!.

In the after noon miss [redacted] came in you will see that at the time.

She ~~told~~<sup>made</sup> us ~~to~~ do a story about school, [redacted] was nearly done.

After it was the end of the day Stienbeck got there home  
here Slugg, [redacted] lived up and went home.



15/6/16 [redacted] is just at school  
 On Monday [redacted] finally woke up but snoozed  
 for a bit then she eventually got out of bed  
 and picked up a box of cereal then she brushed  
 her teeth that she dressed up. Finally, she is in  
 the car then she said "I forgot to give my home  
 work" then [redacted] went back up and got her  
 homework. IAA As she was ready they got  
 to school. When they arrived [redacted] kissed  
 her and goodbye. Then she got to class and thought  
 "my voice is bad when it is the register".  
 Then she got the equipments out after regi-  
 ster and then it was assembly and thought  
 "Please let it be a class assembly of  
 [redacted] she wanted to be... assembly  
 because [redacted] is in [redacted] and the  
 bffs. Then it was actually the church people  
 assembly after that was done she thought  
 "That actually wasn't bad at all" after she knew  
 it was English. Next she thought "yes my  
 favourite subject". After she knew it was  
 nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs she thought  
 "I don't know the differences between adverbs  
 and verbs" but as Miss [redacted] was ambiguous  
 it was pretty clear. Then it was break time  
 she thought "At last it is no listening time"  
 she then played with [redacted] and [redacted]  
 After 15 minutes passed she thought "Now it  
 is much my hardest subject" then when she  
 got into class and did the take and margin Miss  
 [redacted] handed her the sheet she thought "This does  
 not look hard at all" when she had done it then was it  
 lunch. She thought "Yummy in my tummy goes





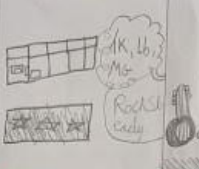







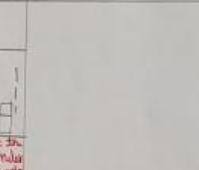

the foot" after she picked up she took herself  
with her backpack box and then took it to the  
classroom after that she went to the rest room  
after she done the thing she needed to do she went  
to the play ground and played with [redacted]  
and [redacted] after that was done she thought "science  
is the second best part of English". When <sup>she</sup> got in the  
classroom she did science after that was  
done she was wondering how to criticise her teacher's  
clothing again. Then it was hometime and  
she thought "school gives us the best the best  
hours of our lives".

<sup>she</sup>  
The next day, when I arrived at school she thought  
"I'm tired and I just snore in a lot and you  
think I'm at home or staying in bed sick"  
then she she grabbed her equipments.  
After that After that, it was register and [redacted] thought  
"The thing I want to do is be a school"  
after that it was spellings [redacted] thought "I'm  
going to pass my pass my test got it".  
after that was assembly After that, wasn't  
assembly but instead it was spelling practice  
[redacted] thought "I love spellings so I'll begin  
tally pass the test" then it was spellings  
and she did what she wanted to pass. As time  
passed by, it was story time to write a  
story and she thought "I'm a great story teller  
so this will be easy. Even as hours passed  
by she thought "now it is break I can enjoy  
the nature." Eventually, it was break over  
and she thought "Now the hottest here" which



Was math after that ended she thought "What's on  
 the menu today from my Packed Lunch".  
 Finally, she finished her lunch and played  
 with some games with [redacted] as it was left  
 play then it was Guided Reading and [redacted]  
 thought it was PE but after that was PE.  
 While Guided Reading finished she got changed  
 and played football and thought "I'm going  
 to be a footballer" and she was one she thought  
 "Thank you for letting me be a footballer".  
 Then some tests started when she had to get changed  
 she thought "I'm lazy so can't I change at home  
 and give it back tomorrow" then it was tidying  
 up and stacking chairs time she thought "I don't  
 care because I'm lazy". After that was done  
 she got her things and went with her dad back  
 home.

Taz

 <p>was sitting at the desk near the printing press. As the day ended, everyone to go. The school doors often everyone it was school. So everyone walked fast but sometimes slow.</p>	 <p>was walking up the stairs trying not to get tired. By the time he reached the top, he was out of breath. He ended the lesson, wondering how he was feeling about school. BUT I REMEMBERED IT WAS ROCK STEADY AND PE!</p>	 <p>YES! Rock Steady is faster than other cultural activities. You get to learn new songs and chords.</p>	 <p>He started to sit down on the carpet, thinking the song, which was "eye of the tiger".</p>	 <p>AS he got up, he thought in his head. It was that. He had just, not only in the minutes, the lesson started and out he went to the library.</p>	 <p>well I was wrong. The lesson will better me because now the closer to PE, the the fun. My favorite subject is PE because it involves sports.</p>
 <p>was running and being happy for the first time. So everyone of his.</p>	 <p>He had to go to PE but found out it was home time. of people it was (by magnetic)</p>	 <p>if you actually started off you can learn a lot. It was PE and it is his teacher's subject.</p>	 <p>AS we played PE, the teacher the signal because it was everyone else loved PE.</p>	 <p>AS we played PE, the teacher the signal because it was everyone else loved PE.</p>	 <p>AS we played PE, the teacher the signal because it was everyone else loved PE.</p>

April

